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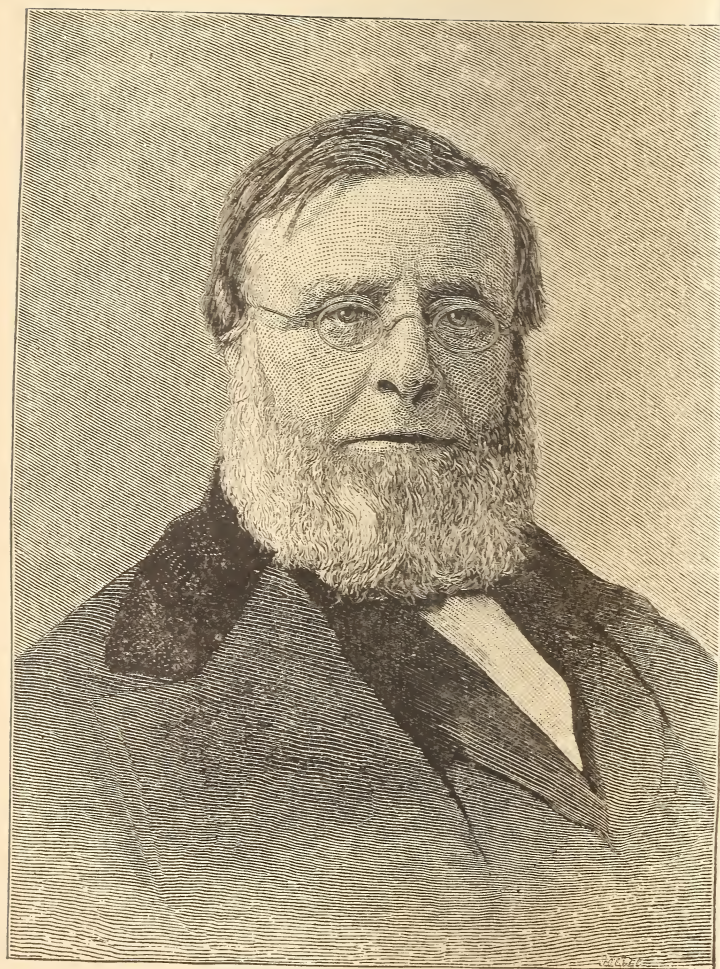
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GOD'S REQUIREMENTS

AND

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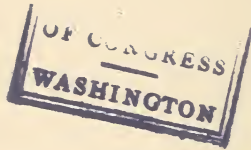
BY
REV. E. H. CHAPIN, DD.,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE DIVINE PATERNITY.



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PUBLISHER'S NOTICE.

IT is believed that the many thousand admirers of the author will all, or nearly all, appreciate the advantage of possessing these valuable sermons in a form that they may continue to preach to their children and children's children. And what legacy could be more appropriate to leave to the rising generation than all that can be collected of the burning words that came from the great heart of this gifted divine?

The Publisher is happily free from the necessity of speaking in the modest terms which the author employs in reference to this volume, and believes he expresses the opinion of a large majority of Dr. Chapin's friends in saying that, while all must admire the high order of his written sermons, they will find in these discourses the additional charm of those spontaneous bursts of eloquence which proceed from the inspiration of the moment, and which render his extemporaneous efforts so popular with his hearers. It may be proper also to state, that most of these sermons were taken down by two different reporters, whose published reports have been carefully compared, and any omissions of importance on either side are embraced in the book.

PREFACE.

THE Discourses in the present volume were taken down from off-hand delivery, and are, I presume, as correct a reproduction of what I said at the time as can be given of the ideas of one who speaks as rapidly as I do. I cannot, however, vouch for the *language* in all instances. Indeed, these Discourses are likely to exhibit at least the *faults* of extemporaneous productions ; and there are undoubtedly forms of speech, and entire passages, which would have appeared in a different shape had they been carefully penned in my study, instead of being struck out upon the instant at white heat. In extemporaneous discourses, too, more than in written ones, must we miss the personal magnetism and the force of delivery, which give them a peculiar influence at the time when they are spoken. However, I have looked over the contents of these pages, with some attempts at revision, and, such as they are, I now send them forth, trusting that God may bless them, and they may help to do His work.

E. H. CHAPIN.

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EXTEMPORANEOUS DISCOURSES.

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS.

And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Micah vi. 8.

THE consummate result of all education consists in the power of applying a few scientific principles. All the possibilities of literature are enfolded in the alphabet. The most abstruse and bewildering calculations, ciphering up in columns and platoons of figures, are only the combination of familiar units. Out of one clear rule or method spring all the products of this branching and luxuriant science. So the highest art and achievement of man's life is but the flowering of one or two germinal truths. Stately philosophies and complex creeds may be reduced to a proposition that can be written in the palm of the hand. So far as they are genuine, so far as they have any real force to help us concerning the great end of our being, this

is the sum and substance of them all ; they are reducible in the last analysis to this : “ Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.”

These, you will see at once, are requirements very easy to understand—worth whole tons of sermons and dissertations. These, the wayfaring man, though a fool, may comprehend. And yet, my friends, these are precepts which whole tons of sermons and dissertations, somehow or another, have not yet made practical in the hearts and lives of men. It is the application of the theory that is requisite ; for there is a vast difference between principles to be applied, and the power of applying principles ; just as there is a difference between the alphabet and the *Iliad* of Homer ; between the first signs in algebra and the calculations of Leibnitz ; between the school-boy’s lesson and the achievements of Newton. Anybody can read the propositions in the text, but who converts them into flowers of the soul, and products of daily life ? Words easily said are these, but what is the essence of them, and what do they call upon us to do ? I maintain that they unfold and point out the entire essence of religion—vital, evangelical religion.

Some people seem to entertain a dread of plain propositions. They do not like to have religion put in simple words ; they want it left with some vagueness and complexity mingled with it. The moment it is put in plain and simple words like these in the text, they begin to suspect it of being merely natural religion, or theol-

ogy—at best, only good morality. They miss the vitality of religion, as they call it. There is nothing in these words, for instance, concerning terms of salvation, or faith in the atonement. There is no peculiar phraseology which covers up and envelops what to many seems to be the very essence of religious teaching. But we may be pretty sure that all the essence and vitality of religion is here. What right have we to add anything to it? For “what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” What else? If any one misses in these words any of the necessary elements of a religious life, he may be sure the fault is in himself, and not in the capacity of the teaching in the text. Christ is here; because who can do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his Maker, without that communion with Christ Jesus, and that inspiration of his spirit, by which alone we are strengthened and guided to do these things?

I repeat, this is religion—its vitality, its essence, and its power, set forth in this simple proposition. And, my friends, what an advantage there is in having religion set before us in a simple proposition! For I am inclined to think that one reason why people are not more practically religious is, that they do not absolutely comprehend what religion is. It is covered up to them in the vagueness of technicalities. It is like a science; they do not enter into it because they can not get over the bristling terminology that stands around

it. They feel that in order to do so they must climb up between these thorny propositions and dogmas; and therefore seeing it thus fenced up and covered over, they do not get into its heart and life. Could they feel how real it is, how it strikes upon the thought and want of the heart, how it comes to them in its plain, substantial garb in the Bible, I think there would be more practical religion.

I say, what an advantage there is in having such a condensed statement of religion! It is a pocket edition of God's truth that we can wear nearest to our hearts, and look at with a glance. When men are perplexed and confused, as they often are about duty; when they do not know which way they should go; when they begin to be curious, prying into their own souls, working down with probes of introspection into the depths of their own hearts, starting spiritual problems that scare them, it is a good thing to stop a moment and put the question to themselves, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" It clears up things; it is like getting a glimpse of a star in heaven, and taking our latitude and longitude, when we have been drifting about on the dark waves of doubt. And so when men get mixed up with speculations, when they think it behooves them to have every possible dogma of the intellect set straight; when they are anxious to see exactly how things are, to have all the great truths of God and the universe linked by a chain of logical

sequence in their minds; when they begin to ask themselves questions about the origin of matter, free-will, Divine necessity, and the sin of Adam, and get tangled up in these things, as if the life of religion depended upon deciding such questions—how good it is again to stop a moment and inquire, What is my practical duty here on earth? What are my relations to God and my fellow-men? It may be very well, as an exercise of the intellect, to enter into these speculations and inquiries, but it is a more practical and useful question, “What doth the Lord require of me to-day?” You can do this if you can not settle the question of free-will, Divine sovereignty, and all those perplexing dogmas. Here is a plain, substantial truth; and is it not good sometimes to have such an arrow of God as the simple question of the text sent right into the heart and conscience?

But, at the same time, we must remember that the words of the text set forth no light affair for our performance. As in other departments, so here the grandest results are but a combination of a few simple elements. If you will observe what is actually contained in these words, you will find what the essence of all right doing, right feeling, and right living is. The text expresses nothing less than all morality, all philanthropy, all religion. I think, therefore, I am right in saying that it expresses the essence of all vital religion, and the highest spiritual life.

In the first place, I say, that all morality is ex-

pressed in the text. The essence and foundation principle of morality is involved in the precept, "Do justly." It is a compact summary of all social duty, binding us not only to legal exactness, but to absolute rectitude, and yielding to no other court of final resort the authority of the court of conscience. It lays its injunctions upon us in solitude and in darkness, as if our actions were read and known. It abolishes all standards of mere selfish advantage and worldly policy, commanding us to do the just, the true, the righteous thing, whatever may come of it in the way of personal or temporal consequences. There is no relation in which we ought to stand to our neighbor, to society, to the world around us, no affection that we ought to entertain for our fellow-men, nothing that we ought to do concerning him, before his face or behind his back, in his knowledge or in his ignorance, not summed up in these words, "Do justly." That is all that is required of you. In the mart, in the workshop, in the counting-room, in the office, in public and private, that is all that is required of you. Be just, clear down to the sockets of your soul—in thought, in deed, in word, in hand, in brain, in heart.

It will not do merely to mumble these words over, and say, "Do justly," in a flippant way. Here is a requirement for a man to test his conduct by, to take as a lamp wherewith to search himself even to the innermost depths.

The first thing to consider in doing this is, What is

my idea of justice? Does it seem limited to the mere scope of legal censure? It seems so to some; their standard of justice seems limited to the point at which the law can not take hold of them or make them suffer, no matter whether they impede the rule of right, and thwart absolute justice or not.

It would be very singular if this great elastic shad-net of the law did not enable them to catch at something balking for the time the eternal flood-tide of justice. Oh, what a vast difference between law and justice—between human enactments and God's everlasting requirements! Sorrow for us if all existing laws were the representatives of God's justice, as men sometimes pompously say.

Is your idea of justice that which is legal, merely—that which the law will enable you to do? Pay twenty-five cents on a dollar, when you ought to pay a hundred, if the law will only let you? Screw the last cent out of a poor man who stands before you in the naked appeal of his poverty, because it is legal? Turn the widow and children out of doors, because you have a legal right to do it? If anything could surprise God Almighty (I speak it with reverence), it must be this. He must look with pitying wonder to see how his children, who every moment depend on his mercy for their very breath, impudently strut forth, in the name of justice, and claim their rights with a hard, unbending, unyielding heart. Is it your idea of justice to set up your individual will, your selfish standard, regulated

only by parchment laws, no matter what the spirit of civilization, no matter what the general good demands? Do you, in your conception of justice, set the sum total of your profits against the sum total of human welfare? Will you deliver up Jesus Christ, or the image of him in humanity, to the authorities for thirty pieces of silver, and call that justice? I repeat, is it not sickening to think how men caricature divine justice, and claim to be its representatives? Oh, no, my friends, law is not always justice, and by slipping into some little knot-hole of legal technicality, we do not escape the requisition in the text. It is a very sublime precept—"Do justice." Oh, how it goes down into the world's heart, and strikes the world's conscience? How it smites the world's sin! How it touches almost every fiber of our social organization, rebuking and commanding us to do justice! The justice that stands forever on God's side, insisting upon the right, the ancient, eternal right, with its clear, awful eyes burning away every sophistry of individual souls, is very different from the justice that is meted out by courts and juries.

With others, justice only means the stern thing, the severe thing—eye for eye, tooth for tooth—give back as good a blow as you receive—that serves any one right—let them have the full force that they gave—that is justice for them. Away with this puling sentimentality about mercy; drive a stern plowshare clear through the human heart, and strike out every truth

that Jesus Christ has planted there ; that is justice in the idea of many. In this way a man gets a good chance to deify his own passions, and thinks he is doing God service. Thus a strong nation, under the pretext of some petty insult from a weaker nation, stalks forth with a desolating army, and teaches it justice with belching fire and gunpowder.

Sometimes men reverse this a very little ; they do not exactly give blow for blow, but they manage in some other way, by some sting of reproach, or some obnoxious word, to get their revenge. They are after their revenge all the while. Even when they profess to be Christians, some men take up the very code of Christ, which requires them to return good for evil, and endeavor not so much to do good to those that injure them as to get revenge. They heap coals of fire on their enemy's head in order to love him ; but they are very much disappointed if the coals do not scorch. Now justice is often a severe thing, but it is never a brutal thing, never a fierce thing. More than this, strange as it may seem, justice is a merciful thing. This calling down fire from heaven, this giving blow for blow, may satisfy the mere savage, uncultivated sentiment of man's heart, but, after all, it does not do the work of true justice. True justice rectifies and sets things right ; blow for blow deranges and sets things wrong. It entails a perpetuity of evil ; revenge follows revenge. When we take in, not merely the good that comes to society, but all the final

results, we see a great difference between the operations of God's justice and what man dignifies with that name. No, my friends, the essence of justice is mercy. You make a child suffer for wrong-doing ; that is merciful to the child. There is no mercy in letting the child have its own will, plunging headlong with the bits in its mouth, to destruction. There is no mercy to society nor to the criminal if the wrong is not repressed and the right vindicated. You injure the soul of the culprit who comes up to take his proper doom at the bar of justice, if you do not make him feel that he has done a wrong thing. You may deliver his body from the prison, but not at the expense of justice, nor to his own injury.

Mercy, good-will—that is always the spirit of justice, depend upon it. Though sometimes it is severe, yet it is never merciless. Sometimes justice requires us to be merciful in expression and action, as well as in feeling and motive. “Love thy neighbor as thyself;” that is justice. It is a merciful, tender, beautiful sentiment. It is the justice of charity—of construing others' acts by that standard in your own breast which shows how much there is to palliate and excuse. Interpret the lives and conduct of others by the best possible motive ; give the most allowance to their transgressions that you can ; that is what you wish them to do to you—not press the hardest construction. What a savage thing this is in society ! A man does an apparent wrong ; he is sure to

have the harshest motive ascribed to him—the whole of his sin forced into his motive. In order to do justly we should construe the conduct of others as we would have our own conduct construed by them.

Let not that man think that he fulfills the requisition of the text who only keeps what he calls an even balance with his fellow-men—pays what he owes, gives back exactly what he receives, and no more. There is no man that keeps an even balance in this way. He does not hold an even balance; every man wants mercy of his fellow men—a large amount of credit—and, construing others in this way, he wants this element of mercy to mingle in his justice. That, in the true sense, is justice; you can not stand in this balanced way of merely paying for what you get, and sending back as good as you receive.

I think thus you will see that all social morality is indicated in the text. It absorbs so much of our being as is occupied in doing. Do justly. It is a lesson that God has set in two words, but it may take man all his life to learn it. All action should be just action. Drive a nail, plane a board, cut a garment, sell a piece of cloth, carve a statue, preach a sermon—whatever you do, do it faithfully, as by contract. Do justly. Though you may cover up your conduct from human eyes, and make a good thing of it, so far as your immediate welfare is concerned, God Almighty sees all the blurs, scars, and flaws, every little neglect, and he says to you, in everything. Do

justly. Is not that the basis of all morality, public and private?

In the next place there comes before us, in the text, a requisition which calls for all the life and power of the most genuine philanthropy. We have seen how the text bears upon morality. "Love mercy." I observe, by the way, that there seems to be in the statement of the text, not merely a collocation of duties, one linked upon the other, but there seems to be in it an analytical sequence, from the fundamental to the elementary and causal. Thus, do justly, comes first; but, in order to do this, we must take a step back—we must love mercy, and the essence of both is to walk humbly with our God. It all blends together in one organic whole.

Here comes in, as you will perceive, the element of feeling coupled with doing. Doing justly is the work—loving is a matter of feeling. In all good and true performances there must be affection. We can not stand, for instance, in cold, formal relations to men and be really just to them. You can not walk among men, icy and hard, without any impression of their life, without any sense of their need, without any pity for their infirmities, and at the same time be just to them. Out of philanthropy springs justice, as, in its highest form, that springs out of the ocean-depths of God's love. People sneer at philanthropy sometimes, call it mere sentiment, mere weak feeling concerning the woes and wants of man. It is not mere sentiment.

The grandest justice in this world is that which is conceived by the spirit of an earnest, toiling humanity. When philanthropy stands upon its true basis it will not stand upon the common ground of mere alms-giving charity, but of justice. Do justly to the poor; that is all you are required to do. Do justly to your fellow-men who are weak; do justly to the oppressed. The true cry of philanthropy is a burning watchword ringing all round the world, requiring justice between man and man. What is the essence of philanthropy? It comes from the warm sympathy which great hearts feel for man, because they are implicated with humanity, feel its life, and know what its woes and wants are. It is a great cry for justice, and not for mere charity.

For all good and noble ends we ought to love mercy. There can be no beneficent power in this world that does not spring from love. Love mercy, which, though often dictating and requiring the severest measures of justice, rejoices when it need not be so. Yes, it rejoices in forgiveness and renunciation; rejoices when the presumed guilty are found innocent. There is often a feeling of disappointment in some minds when a man pronounced guilty is found innocent. All the excitement, all the romance of the case is gone. True mercy rejoices when it need not be so; is glad to palliate when it can. Like Christ on the cross, the merciful man says, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Oh, how much sublime

tenderness appears in those words ! Was this a covering up of sin ? Some people think it a weakness for a man not to let justice have its course. Let it have its course in its severest form when it must, but it is justice to palliate when you can and when you ought. Jesus Christ in that expression on the cross did not cover up anything. Those fierce soldiers thrust the spear into him ; they knew not what they did ; but it took all of Jesus Christ's spirit to see that fact and to look up with his nailed hands and bleeding face to God, and say, " Oh, Father, they know not what they do ; pardon them." And this is the essence of all mercy.

It is always the case, my friends, that they who have really the love of mercy in them, while they must sometimes enforce the sterner measures of justice, rejoice when they can palliate. And here is the great power of men with their fellow-men ; here is the redeeming power which God sends into the world—the power of sympathy, of being one with humanity, of taking hold of and finding out that which is best. In this way have all great and good things been wrought. It is this spirit that has led men to death, to sacrifice for humanity, and has given them all the power they had. You never can lift men up and bring them into God's kingdom by any other way than loving them, and implicating yourself with them.

During the past week we have had a most extraordinary spectacle, so extraordinary in its character that it rises above the topic of a mere literary festival, and

I must take the liberty therefore to advert to it even in the pulpit. I allude to the honors paid to the Scottish plowman and poet. What is the meaning of these demonstrations? They were not merely honors paid to a literary man; such a man could not receive such honors; he never could have awakened such feelings. Nor were they honors merely to the poetry of Burns. Sweet and beautiful as it is, it was the humanity of the man that kindled all this feeling. His great heart took in and sent out in a mighty gulf-stream an ocean-tide of common humanity. Men will always feel a respect and reverence for that. It will cover up a great many sins. Mankind will pass over many shortcomings when they write the epitaph of a great heart. They will respond to that which he has uttered. And some day, they will stop the belching of the cannon, forget their nationalities, and feel in the glow of such an awakening as that as though they were one great human brotherhood.

Here is the power by which the world is to be redeemed—the power of getting into our own humanity, and feeling for it. You may say, What a poor, miserable, abominable creature man is! you may stop at some revelation of social horror and say, What a hell there is in man! but that is not the way to redeem him. You have got to search for something below the hell—to dive deep into the essence of humanity and uncover that. Many people are accustomed to think that the religion of Jesus Christ is a worship of the

high and a desecration of the low; that on the one hand it is an external form and ceremony, a compliment to God, and on the other it is pointing out man as a being totally depraved, and saying, "See what a poor, corrupt, degenerate creature he is!" The whole essence of such worship appears either in ecclesiastical forms, or in a stern, harsh theology. The worship of Jesus Christ is not the worship of what is high and the degrading of what is low; it is a condescension of the high and a lifting up of the low—Christ coming down to man, the meanest man, searching under all the corruption and refuse of humanity, finding his heart, taking it up in his nailed-pierced hand, and saying, "God forgive him, he knows not what he does." It is not an abstraction; it has been exemplified in Jesus Christ.

Moreover, as doing justice involves the essence of all action, I suppose mercy is the essence of all love. The mother of the little child at first feels strange instincts in her heart. Her love has taken no form other than that of mercy to a little helpless being cast upon the heaving billows of her own bosom. If you find a family where there is a poor, little, weak child, it is beloved more than all the rest. If you want to love your fellow-men, have mercy on them. When even an enemy comes before you, and all power to hurt you is gone, you can forgive and love him. And so I suppose we may say that the love of God for poor, weak man is mercy for him. Guilty, sinful, degraded as he is, the infinite

mercy throbs for him. Loving mercy is the spring of all right feeling, as doing justly is of all right being.

The final requirement is to be religious—to walk humbly with thy God. Speaking according to analytical sequence, neither to be just nor merciful is the primal thing, for we can not do so unless we come into communion with the spirit of Almighty God. We can not do a right thing only as we are inspired to do it. This shows us not only what we are to do and to feel, but what we are to be ; and this is of more consequence, because it is primary. To walk humbly with our God shows us the primal spring of all we can do or feel. You know how much stress Jesus Christ laid upon this point. He said, “A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” This is a fact of primary consequence, and it depends upon our becoming one with God and walking with him ; in other words, walking reverently and humbly. And this is certainly the very essence of all true religion—to walk humbly with God. Is it not a beautiful as well as a thrilling thought ? Some scholars would render the text, “Walk humbly BEFORE God ;” but I think it is more accordant with the spirit of the Bible when we take it the other way, because it is the peculiarity of the Bible that it makes God a personality, brings him down into communion with men. Philosophy demonstrates and proves that there is a God by a slow logical process, and finally lifts you up on a great platform where you can take a

telescopic view of the Almighty. Then there is a kind of Oriental mysticism which meditates about God, which stands afar off and gazes upon the effluence of his glory. The religion of the Bible makes us to walk with God. It gives us a sense of a personal relation to him. The Bible is full of it. The Psalms all overrun with it, and that is the reason why they live forever, and are read more than any other part of the Old Testament. They are all glowing with a sense of the personal presence of God. They make us feel that affection, wisdom, goodness are not abstractions, but qualities of a kindred personality. That is the peculiarity of the Bible. It makes God a kindred personality; he hears our prayers and consorts with our weakness. There is a personal God revealed in the Bible, with whom we may commune and walk, as we do. We become like him, and we obtain, therefore, in ourselves the real springs and powers of all good feeling and all good action. The essence of religion is in walking humbly with God; while we do this and when we do this we shall love mercy, we shall do justly.

Now, my friends, I ask you if the requisitions in the text, so simple and so easy in the memory and upon the lips, are not like most simple things, of great value and importance? Exactly as I said in the commencement, in regard to the alphabet, that all literature is in it; or, like the simple figures one learns in the multiplication or addition table—they contain the ele-

ments of the most abstruse computations. But the thing is to apply the principles. That requires power—just as Homer applied the Greek alphabet, by the inspiration that was in him, to that wondrous epic that lives forever; just as Newton took the knowledge of figures and transmuted them into such wondrous results. This is the process of education so far as man's intellect is concerned. Education is the power that enables men to apply the alphabet to the results of literature, and figures to the results of mathematics. But there is something required which is more than mere exercise of the intellect—it is the surrender and sanctification of the will and the affections. All who yield their will and affections to the spirit that was in Christ, come under the requisition of the text. It is a surrendering, a transfiguration, a regeneration of the heart that brings men into a position in which they can walk humbly with God, do justly, and love mercy. Think of the greatness of these results, where one walks humbly with God. What do you think of a being that can veritably walk with God day by day, hour by hour, in communion with that infinite spirit, lifted up, inspired, glorified by it, beyond all materialism, shallow atheism, and false and degrading notions of man? What a privilege, what a delight to be able to walk with anything higher than ourselves! What a power to be capable of walking with God! Some men do not walk at all, they are so much in the bondage of sins and cares. To walk with something good

and excellent, as a pupil with a teacher; to walk with Nature in all its glorious manifestations; to walk with her when the summer flower lifts up its face to the sky; to walk with the great and good men, the living and the dead, is a great thing. But God is the inspiration of all human excellence, the quickener of all human thought; and when we can walk with him we do not need anything else; we can walk with him everywhere. The obscure, the weak, the lowly, all have this blissful privilege of walking with him in sorrow, in trial, in the hurry and rush of daily life; and in the last hour, when this body, like a garment, shrivels and drops away, and we go up to the eternal fields, upon heights of glory and of power, forever and forever onward and upward, we shall walk with God.

A NEW HEART.

Make you a new heart and a right spirit,—Ezekiel xviii. 31.

THESE were the words which the Lord, through the lips of the prophet, addressed in mingled tones of warning and encouragement to the rebellious house of Israel; but they are words fitted to the ears and to the souls of communities and individuals in all times. They break upon us to-day. Each of us may interpret them according to his own need and condition. “Make you a new heart and a new spirit.

Let me proceed to observe, in the first place, that this is an exhortation which, in one form or another, every man needs to hear. There are a great many theories, my friends, which are rendered almost superfluous by actual facts, and it is sad to think how much of our theorizing—of our religious theorizing especially—is practically useless, and worse than useless—how much of it is mere waste and hindrance, because we do not theorize and work at the same time; but our theorizing prevents our working. Here is a man who has to cross a river. There is no difficulty in crossing

—the bridge is there—it is plain and palpable ; but he stops to speculate how the bridge could have been erected—how it could span the river—and he goes still deeper into subtilties, and speculates how it is possible that he has the power of crossing it, and all the while neglects the work before him in theories that amount to no practical value, if they ever could be decided.

Now here is a simple, practical work set before a man—to make himself a new heart and a new spirit. So far as man's own immediate action is concerned, there is little reason why he should perplex himself with controversies or questionings about human ability and total depravity. I do not say that the truth or falsehood of these theories is not an important consideration. The truth or falsehood of any theory is important that bears upon spiritual realities, and colors all our views of God and life and duty. This is the value of doctrinal truth. Not that it gives us intellectual or logical consistency ; not that it constitutes a sharp-edged system with which we can win a controversy ; but it is valuable because of the great truths it clears up, and the different stand-points from which we may look upon God, our own souls, our own relations, possibilities, and powers. But I say no man need trouble himself long with theories, so far as his own immediate duty is concerned, in this demand for practical action ; for whether he be tainted with Adam's sin or not, he is a sinner ; whether he be totally depraved or not, there is enough

over-balancing evil in him, enough of wrong affections and triumphant sin, to excite him to endeavor to make for himself a new heart and a new spirit.

So this exhortation before us is no mere historical saying, fossilized in the past—bound up with the history of the rebellious Jews. It is a living word, and speaks at this very hour, vibrating from heaven throughout every soul: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit."

Another question may be disposed of, when we consider how practical this appeal is, and that is the question of, Who makes a new heart? Do you make it, or does God make it? Now a little further back in this same book of Ezekiel, we find God's agency brought pre-eminently forward, when He says: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." Now here, as almost everywhere else, we find two poles to one truth, one referring to God, and one to man, but the moment we come to act, they are reconciled. If one warms into earnest effort upon the idea of having a new heart and a new spirit, the two conditions of God's agency and man's agency will melt together. If he stand still in cold, barren speculation, he freezes to death. God does something, and you have something to do in this achievement of making a new heart and a new spirit. The Apostle puts the two agencies close enough together, I think, when he says—"Work out your own salvation,

for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do." Now there is no more difficulty about the theory of making a new heart, or entering upon a religious life, than there is about anything else, the moment we enter earnestly into action. But it certainly seems a very perplexing and discouraging procedure to keep urging a man to turn from evil, and get rid of his bad habits and affections—to make himself a new heart and a new spirit—and then to add that he can do nothing for himself, but must wait the breath and influence of God—must wait until God gives him a new heart and spirit. As I said last Sunday, so I take occasion to say now, that I verily believe that one reason why people stand aloof so much from the religious life, from entering heartily and earnestly into it, is the fact that it has been presented in such a vague and perplexing way, and encumbered with so many speculations; so that we have really a kind of preaching which urges upon men the great guilt of their sin and their alienation from God, and then tells them that they can do nothing of themselves. And I repeat this is all borne away by the simple condition, that a man must be in earnest in regard to this new heart and spirit. And it is a mistake to suppose that God is not glorified when we dwell upon the point of human action. When we say you can make a new heart and a new spirit, it is a great mistake to suppose that we take the glory from God. For whence come all good desires and all right actions? They proceed from God, and from Him alone. And so

do all strength and all ability. One of the greatest intellectual errors into which a man can fall, is the habit of ignoring the divine in the common, and looking for it only in the special and unfamiliar, not to see God in the ordinary machinery of action, not to behold Him in ordinary processes ; but if something strange bursts upon us, something not in accordance with the usual course of events, then to recognize the divine. It is not the thing itself, its utility, its beauty, its power, that stamps it as divine—only its strangeness.

You see in this tendency the danger that we are apt to encounter. The moment we can discover the law of the event, the moment we find it taking its place in the order of natural sequence, it becomes no longer divine ; and so, by-and-by, all nature becomes atheistic. There was a time when almost every phenomenon in nature was unaccounted for, and everything was called divine ; but as fast as its law was discovered, and it took its place in the order of natural sequence, the thing was no more divine ; that only which was mysterious and unknown being placed in that category. And so as the torch of investigation advances farther and farther into the realms of nature's laws, men could limit the divine and at length eliminate it from all things. No, my friends, the truest philosophy is that which recognizes everything as divine ; that sees in all laws, in all constituted order, in the flow of common events, in the movements of familiar things, the Divine hand, the Divine presence and power, just as much as in the

strange and marvelous that startle the mind and weigh it down with awe.

I repeat: all strength, all ability, is from God. A man does not get an education, any more than a new heart, of himself. Is it not Providence that furnishes the circumstances which may incite him to the pursuit of an education, and help him to get it? Is it not Providence that touches the mysterious processes of the mind by which education becomes possible? Now suppose we should say, "This matter of getting a new heart is a process of self-education;" it would be reduced to simple terms, and yet a great many would start from it and say, "This won't do; it is too cold and naturalistic—too much of human agency to call getting religion a process of self-education." And yet what is self-education but the inspiration and the life of the divine? You do not strike God out when you put human agency in. In reality this is the sum of the matter; self-education in the Christian spirit and Christian life, is the process of getting a new heart and a new spirit with the Divine agency implicated with it, and apparent in it. A man does not steer a ship, does not sow a seed, does not lay a brick, of himself; God works with him; implicated, in the last analysis, in the mysterious action both of the mind and body. Why will we turn divine inspiration out of the broad area of human affairs and limit it only to the Bible? Grant that, in a fuller and more peculiar measure, it flowed into him who penned the Psalms and those who

spoke burning words of prophecy; grant, that, with a peculiar light, it beamed forth from the face of the Apostles; still, at the same time, has God breathed no inspiration at all into other men? Grant, that the old heathen sages were not in the advanced light of divine revelation; were they so utterly excluded from God that their words of wisdom and of love were but mere words of man's wisdom? Was that the measure of moral stature to which they attained—utterly excluded from God? Is any achievement of man—of the cunning pencil, the strong hammer—the work of the eye or the arm—of the eager muscles, or the bounding brain—entirely without God's help and agency?

The fact is just this: God stands ready with His conditions which are necessary to all human effort and to all success, whenever man is ready to fall in with those conditions. When we set the sail, the wind will blow; when we sow the seed, the agencies that God himself has prepared in the atmosphere and in the earth will perform their part; and when we set ourselves to work to make a new heart, God's spirit will breathe upon us and help us to consummate the work. That is the answer to all quibbles about prayer—how God Almighty can answer prayer and yet keep the laws of the physical universe stable. Why, the laws of the physical universe do not transcend all laws. There is a realm of spirit above the mere physical where man comes in contact with God, and God comes in contact

with man; and if we fall in with those spiritual laws, if we respond to those superior conditions, then there is no physical law intercepted or violated because God answers our prayer. How do you know that a physical law is violated, if when a man prays for inward strength to overcome temptation, God breathes it into him? Where is the violation of a physical law? How much do you know of disease; how much do our physicians know of disease? We can see that they do not deny that God Almighty can touch the secret springs of his agencies, so that when we pray that a friend may get well, that friend may be healed. Fall in with the conditions of prayer, just as you fall in with the conditions of the growth of harvest during seed-time. God stands ready with his subtile agencies of light, air, and soil; sow your seed, and harvest will come. So God stands with his agencies of inspiration and deliverance; breathe your prayer and you have touched the spring of established agencies by which it shall be answered. Seek to get a new heart with all your might, just as you seek an education. God stands ready to do his work with his agencies, and the glory redounds to him. Just put yourself in the attitude to receive them; go to work to make a new heart, just as if you were an ambitious man and were going to make an effort for human power; or as if you had lost a fortune and were going to work to make a new one; or as if you had your reputation tainted, and you were going to try to retrieve it.

Yes, go to work to make a new heart; act earnestly about it and God will do his part. You will not take glory to yourself. No man that knows what it is to strive to overcome evil affections within, and sore temptations without, to grow better and purer, will take anything to himself in working out that deliverance. If in any degree he shall attain that end, he will feel that he has had Divine help—that something higher than he has breathed into him and inspired him. The very process of his work will show where he touches God, and where God Almighty has helped him, and he will give all the glory to him. So it is perfectly consistent with God's power and glory to speak to us in the words of the text, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit."

It is a call to action. What are you waiting for? Actually, people are waiting, in the matter of the religious life, for some strange event to take place—either some outward concurrence of God's providence, or else some inward motion of his mysterious help which they can palpably feel, before they can turn in and answer the prophet's appeal made in the text. Waiting for what? To have a right heart and a right spirit. Some are waiting for a great shock or convulsion which shall run over the community, termed a religious revival; or, as I have before remarked, for some strange act of Providence. My friend, you will be in no better condition a year hence, if you live, than you are now. You will never be in a better condition than now to make your-

self a new heart. The call is at once; it is now. The Divine agencies are ready; it is only for you to surrender yourself to the conception of the great purpose and the great aim, and God will answer, and the blessing will come flowing within. It is a question of agency, and we need have no fear of attributing too much to human efforts.

In the next place, let us consider the peculiarity which this power and privilege of making a new heart exhibits in man. It is a wonderful thing that a man can make himself a new heart. How all little, shallow skepticisms go down before one grand moral fact! Superficial science affects to see in man nothing but a superior animal—a highly developed ape; and judged solely by its standard, man is but little superior, and in some respects appears inferior, to the higher order of brutes. But when we seek to find the true standard of excellence, how distinct he stands from all the creatures around him! The moment we make that exploration, we discover that there is a progressive power in him, by which he advances from limit to limit, from point to point, and by which even the lowest soul exhibits a capacity of boundlessness and a power of changing the life, while the most solid materials of this round globe become before the inspiration of his spirit and skill of his intellect, as clay to the potter. All sealed things he unloosens; all secrets he lays open; and as he marches on from point to point of civilization, of glory, of intellectual attainment, of scientific achieve-

ment, by the inward power within him, the outward world is changed and assumes aspects that reflect his genius and thought.

But there is more than this in man. There is the power of going into himself, and quarrying in the deep places of his own soul. There is a power of changing the tendency and plane of his own life. You never heard of that in the brutes. They all run in the same round, move forward in the same direction, revolve in the same orbit from age to age. But man has the power of stopping short, changing his direction, lifting up the level of his life, and becoming a new being. So it is the inward change that makes him the new being. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No; but man is capable of a moral change that makes him actually a new creature. For what constitutes the new man? Not change of bodily vesture, not change of outward circumstances. The man has not necessarily a new life when he is transported to some other scene of action; and in localizing heaven, in making it a material scene, it is a great mistake to suppose that all that is to constitute the future life of man is a change of place and condition. Oh, no; the new life consists in having a new heart and new spirit, wherever man is placed. Paul in the dungeon at Philippi sings in the very orchestra of heaven, and makes it ring with his psalms. And John on the isle of Patmos sees the walls of the new Jerusalem, with their golden doors and crystal founda-

tions. It is not where a man is, but what he is, that makes the new life, the new man, the new condition. It is the new spirit that comes into a man that produces the great and vital change. This is the new birth of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus. Man should be born again; he should enter into a new spiritual life, with new affections, new aims, new points of view, new tendencies. If you could give a man a new physical creation, if you could take literally the old fleshy heart out of him and put in a new fleshy heart, that would not give him a new spirit and make a wise man of him, and that is the reason why these two things are conjoined in the text. They are one thing. "Make you a new heart and a new spirit," and then you have the new man—then you have new life.

Oh, how wonderfully religion adjusts itself to the great facts and needs of human nature! for is there anything that could be stated of such immediate and vital importance as this simple appeal, "Make yourself a new heart?" Religion does not circle around a man in metaphysical speculation. It does not go back to historical and ethnological questions. It comes and sets itself right down before the citadel of a man's sin and a man's want; it strikes right at the vital point; it says, Make yourself a new heart; cast away your transgressions; rise with a new spirit and a new aim; seek the great ends for which God has made you to live; seek the ideal which Christ sets up before you.

Is it not a great thing that a man has this power—I ask once more—this possibility, that he can go to the most abandoned creature that God has made in the shape of humanity, and have the strong assurance to say to him, “Oh, castaway—oh, ingrate—oh, alien from your Father and from Christ your Saviour, stir, oh, stir under those cerements of abomination; quicken to new life under all the darkness and dreadfulness of sin; make yourself a new heart and become a new man?” Man is immensely separated from all creatures round and about him in this capacity and this privilege.

Out of this change come all other changes. No movement for the regeneration of society, no measure for the improvement of the world, can be radically effective only as it comes out of the reservoirs of individual hearts. It is a good world or a bad world, as men’s hearts are good or bad. Man himself is the world, and as he is, so things will be. How vital, how radical, then, is the appeal made in the text! In all conditions of life, in all trials, in all misfortunes, this is what we want—a new heart—and then the aspect of things will be changed. Because we can not always change things themselves. The man that is borne down by calamity can not alter his calamity. There it stands before him—the misfortune that perhaps has blasted well-founded hopes, deprived him of his property or his station in society. But make yourself a new heart; fall into harmony with God’s law in the matter; see your

misfortune in a providential point of view, far up in the light of some higher and grander purpose which God has in store for you, and look if the thing will be changed. It will stand there as a calamity if you look at it in your old way; but if you look at it in the light of God's providence, it will be a new thing to you.

Oh, mourning friend, weeping companion, bowed down and desolate soul, death is a terrible fact, and it can not be altered. The green grave is there to be covered by the winter snow; the vacant house, the empty chair, the garments never to be worn again, the echoes never more to be awakened, the voice of music never again to peal in your ear, are all sad mementoes; but make yourself a new heart, come into accordance with the infinite design and purpose, and even in this heavy affliction will your soul become attuned and accorded to that perfect trust in God which Christ had when he took the cup and drank it, and the aspect of calamity will be changed to you. It is the new heart you want. That is the great distinction in men—the heart; not simply conventional motives. If a man has what is called a good heart, then we can trust him. However in fault for the moment he may seem, however wrong may be his course (not that he is to make the possession of a good heart an excuse for his errors; that is not an excuse; you are not good-hearted the moment you offer that excuse for your sin), we who have no right to judge harshly our fellow-man, we who can not pass sentence upon his short-comings, can make large

allowance from the fact that under his temporary aberrations the man has a good heart. The most hopeless case is, where a man's heart is all corrupted. Beauty grows as ghastly as a skeleton the moment we find that under the rosy cheeks and bright eyes there is a false, hollow heart. Talent becomes but as a mere torch-light that is carried among tombs—like those burning exhalations we see in swamps—the moment we find that under the brilliant intellect there is a false, rotten, corrupted heart. Thus it is in the motives of the heart that we are to distinguish and estimate men.

But there is another respect in which men differ, and that is in strength and capacity of heart; so that some men are distinguished by the fact that in all calamities, in all trials they gather out of their hearts the resources of a new and better life. It is just like a perpetual spring within them. If one form of contemplated good perishes, if one hope drops away, if one resource fails, down they go, down into their hearts again, and call up something else. A great strong heart is never overcome. It finds its own resources and falls back into its own possibilities. It is sad to find a man who says, "I have no heart;" to see a forlorn creature who says, "I have no power to struggle any more;" but as long as there is no blight or taint, the power, the possibility of the man is left. There was our gifted historian, who died so suddenly the other day. See how that physical calamity which

occurred to him in his early years would have affected some men. They would have crouched literally by the way-side of life, and even if they had had that man's powers they would have made their calamity an excuse for a life of idleness and waste. How was it with him? He fell back into his own great and noble heart and out of it he brought up new life which became to him a strength and power that perhaps he never would have exhibited had not that misfortune happened to him. But for that he might have been a scholar; or much worse, a politician; but the twilight of almost total blindness having fallen on him, he called up those powers and concentrated them upon the great work of history, and when building up this historical structure, just as an architect builds up a great cathedral, like that at Cologne, standing forth majestic and glorious, he profited by the very calamity that excluded him from other pursuits and aims. Yea, and with a still nobler spirit, when others lamented his calamity and sought to condole with him in his misfortune, he sang songs in the night and spoke noble words of cheer and encouragement. Now I say it was not out of the intellect, but out of a noble and faithful heart streamed forth that beautiful life which made this man one of the stars in the constellation of our literature.

“Make you a new heart.” How vital this is! It goes below all things else. It goes to the center of a man's personality, and out of it springs all real life.

Not make yourself new brains. We do not want them so much as hearts. Not new conditions. We see men well endowed with conditions, but not with the will to use them. We want new hearts; not new intellectual powers. We can not make new brains, but we can, every one of us, make a new heart. The great consideration is, Do we desire a new heart? What is the life within? Are we selfish? Are we gravitating simply to this world, living within our aims, vain cares, and uses? Across the sweep of ages come the prophet's words, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit." There is nothing vague or mysterious about it. Change your affections if they are selfish; change your aim if it is low; lift up your eyes to that mark of the high calling to which Christ draws you, and let the spirit that was in him be in you. That is making a new heart. Take your heart with earnest purpose and fervent prayer to the cross of Christ, hold it up as a chalice, and let him fill it with his divine excellence and divine self-sacrifice, and then, in the possession of his quickening spirit, you will have a new heart.



LOVE OF THE WORLD.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1 John ii 15

I SUPPOSE there are a great many who would render consent to the injunction and doctrine of this text literally interpreted—render consent with their lips, but withhold it in their hearts. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” To them this is the very essence of religion, and of course they feel that they must confess it with their lips, and they do. Surely they must show outward respect for religion, and if religion says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” they must say so, too. And yet, I repeat, their hearts do not make this confession; but while they reiterate it with their lips, they *do* love the world and the things of the world, and can not help loving them.

This only shows what an unreal thing with many people religion is—so unreal that they are ready to confess to any statement of its doctrines, and then practice right the contrary in their lives. And this is the way in which religion is regarded among men very generally

—at least too commonly—as a matter of limitation—something that we are not to do. Men look upon it as a prohibitory law more than anything else. It comes to them in its form of law, as an external sanction, a limitation to the natural instincts of humanity, often hedging in our natural affections and commanding us not to do this or that; and just in proportion as a thing is beautiful and dear, just in proportion as it seems good to us, a great many think the merit of a religious life is in turning away from it; just in proportion as they yearn for it they feel that they must cast it off. This is the reason why many hold religion in such a Jesuitical way. They confess to the full tenor of the letter; they come smooth up to the requirement of the precept, and then seeing that both letter and precept are impossible to be fulfilled according to their interpretation of them, they resort to subtile evasions—to explanations in their lives which they do not make with their lips—and thus exhibit great inconsistency. And hence we find many religious people are such unlovely people. So far as they entertain any notion of religion at all, it is made up of this principle of prohibition, restraint, and asceticism. They do not come to us as Christ came, presenting something that we really love, something that attracts the mind, something that moves the affections of the soul, but they come to us, so far as their religious character is concerned, bristling all over with these prohibitions and restraints. This is why religion is held so inconsistently, as I have said; the life not accordant

with the professions of the lip; the daily walk, the ordinary round of performance not answering to that which is held and insisted upon as a dogma.

This is why men who profess religion are very often so worldly. They have two compartments to their being—a religious compartment, separate from everything else, into which they enter once in awhile and manifest to the world what they consider godliness; and a worldly compartment, in which they cut loose entirely from their religion, and live according to the ordinary standard of men. In fact, they live below that standard; for you will often find men who are very strict in religious observances and professions, who, in regard to every-day duties, fall far below the men of the world.

Now nothing is to be lamented more than this unreality of religion. I wish people would just look at this for awhile. Here is religion in the world—here is its system of truths—here are its requirements, its teachings concerning God, duty, and destiny—here are its great sanctions, bearing upon inward life, upon spiritual realities, upon the highest interests of the soul. I would that men would ask themselves whether this is real or not. It can not be denied that though professing to teach these profoundest of truths, though bearing upon these greatest of all interests, religion is, with some men, the most unreal of all things in the world. It is not real as their homes are real, as their daily rounds of social intercourse

are real, as their business is real. If men would but sit down for one hour and address themselves to the great question—Is there a reality in religion? has it this claim upon my life and soul?—if they would look at it in this view instead of merely rendering an outward respect for it as matter of course, or taking it as a traditional creed, making it consist in going to church and listening to preaching, I think there would come a change over the hearts of men, over the surface of society, over all the relations, objects, and duties of life.

Now why is it that religion is so presented? It is because such statements as that made in the text receive an inconsiderate interpretation. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” Men know that taking that literally, it is impossible to obey it, and at the same time they profess to consider it as a positive injunction of religion, and so interpret it. It is unreal to them because it is impossible in practice, and religion itself is involved in that unreality.

But on the other hand, a man who thinks about religion, to whom of all things it has the greatest reality, who has made up his mind that to whatever it requires he will surrender his entire heart and soul and have no double dealing, no compromise, that man first of all would set himself to thinking what the text really means. He would not take it with a prompt assent as a complimentary confession on his part without regard to the signification of the passage. Convinced that

there can be no antagonism between the great primal instincts of the heart and the great requirements of religion, he would ask whether this really means that we are to love nothing in the world—neither fair sight nor pleasant sound, neither dear child nor devoted friend. In one word, is religion asceticism? Are the natural affections, using that term in its popular sense, wrong? Because when you come to the passage where the Apostle speaks of the natural man and natural affections, you must remember that he is speaking of the sensual man as distinguished from the spiritual man—not of man as God has made him, in the primal condition of his nature, but simply in the lower part of his nature. And when he says the natural man can not understand the things of God, he means the sensual man—the man who lives from the senses and looks at things in a sensual point of view. Such a man can not understand the things of God. It is not true that in the natural man, as he comes from the hands of his Maker, there is no right affection, no good thing; but in the sensual man there is no spiritual thing, no ground of religion. You must go higher, with the spiritual man, and take the phrase “natural affection” as meaning those deep instincts, those primal sympathies which God himself has implanted in our nature.

Is it true, then, that religion requires us to sacrifice every natural affection? If it is, then comply with it. If religion is this everlasting form of truth, and relates to our eternal interests—if true religion is the will of

God, and is that method by which we come into accordance with God—and if it calls upon us to sacrifice every natural affection, and turn away from every beautiful thing, then comply with it. None of this profession of religion without confession of it. Away with anything like playing religion; away with anything like simulated faith and righteousness; forsake the mere ordinary pursuits of life, and cling to the altar-cloth, the prayer-book, Sunday severity, and amateur mortification; put on sackcloth and run to the cloister. If religion is such a thing, then Simeon Stylites, on his pillar-top, was a pattern saint.

But if this is not the ideal of religion, let us find out what the true ideal is. If there is a love of natural things perfectly consistent with, and flowing out from the love of God—if a man may be religious, and yet comprehensive in his love, fond of nature, fond of art, attracted to the really beautiful and excellent, kind and loving among his fellow-men, endowed with friendly affections and world-wide sympathies, overflowing with generous impulses and instincts—if a man may be devout, and yet have all these, let us know it, and if we know it, let us act accordingly. But let our type of religion be one thing or the other—not an ineffectual effort to join the two—not an attempt to be ascetic and yet cheerful, to quit the world and yet be in it, to deny every beautiful affection, and yet yield to the influence of that affection. And certainly, as to worldly good, a great many hold on to it so tightly,

that they go into their graves clinging to their money-bags, when they think they have fast hold on the Bible. Let us have no sham religion, no unsubstantial religion, but let it be a reality. I would to God that this subject would take possession of men's minds; that every interest would be suspended to examine the ground of true religion, divest it of all falsehood, and discover its reality; and then that men would take it into their hearts, and illustrate it in their lives. So long as it is made to consist in the mere affirmation of the lips, with no application to the heart and life, so long shall we see that unreality and deadness which prevail in the world.

Now what is the doctrine in the text? When we consider it in its connection and bearing, we find it is not a mere statement of negations. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." It does not stop with this. Why not love these? Because we are called to cherish a higher and more comprehensive affection; we are to love, not the world, nor the things of the world supremely, because if we do, we can not love the Father supremely. That is the positive state of the case. We are to love the Father supremely. We can not love any two things supremely. We can not love nature, or our business, our children, our wives, our houses, our lands, or our lives supremely, and at the same time love God supremely. That is the point. It sets before us a supreme object of our love. It is a question of standards. What shall that

supreme object be? It sets before us God as that object. It brings Him to us in all the forms of His loveliness, in all His claims upon our affection. It sets him up before us, and requires us to love him supremely; and if we love him supremely, we can not love the world, nor the things of the world, supremely. We can not make them the standard of our love and action, and yet make him the standard of our love and action. All things that God loves, and in which he shows forth his love—all things consistent and compatible with the love of God our Father, we may love; but we love them as the result of loving the Father. For instance: we may of course love all things that are essentially right, because they are of the Father, and in loving them we love the Father; but we can love nothing that is essentially wrong.

There are some who try to preserve a sort of balance between the two—between the spirit that makes this world supreme, which of course dissolves all moral distinction between right and wrong; and the spirit that makes God supreme, which claims as right the love of right only. There are some who wish to keep in with both these elements. They want the world and they want heaven. They try to live on both sides of the fence, and they hope to postpone the inevitable collision between the two forces. It is like compromising with a cancer, or holding negotiations with the yellow fever. There are only two standards—that which proceeds from the love of God as supreme;

that which proceeds from the love of the world as supreme. You can not serve them both. You can not cheat six days in the week, and get into heaven with a good long leap on Sunday. You can not connect those things which flow from the love of the world as supreme, with those which flow from the love of God as supreme.

The truth is, the whole statement of the text rests upon the trite and simple fact, that every man has a master-motive in his heart, which he more or less consciously acts upon. If you look upon men superficially, there are some whose lives you may think are chaotic and incongruous, from the fact that they seem to have no end or aim, their life spent floating this way and that without any apparent purpose. You may think they have no master-motive in their lives—no controlling principle which shapes their ends—but they have. Such men are influenced by the love of ease—of their own personal gratification—and they go wherever they think they can find it. They flit from object to object, as butterflies flit from flower to flower, sipping, by turns, of this and of that; but as the butterfly, inconstant as it seems, has its motive, so the apparently aimless man of pleasure has his master-motive, which consists in the love of ease. And so all men, when you come to examine them, have some great master-principle, around which all their actions gravitate, out of which all their conduct proceeds, and which,

could you get at it, would explain the whole of their interior life and moral history.

I repeat; when you look at the matter closely, there are two divisions among men—those who are guided by the love of God the Father as supreme, and those who love the world supremely.

There is one general ground from which a man measures. Here, for instance, is a man that measures from the love of the world, from the summit of worldly advantage. If you want to explain his life, you do it in this way: he starts with worldly sanctions and worldly interests, and thus sometimes measures up to spiritual claims and moral laws. So you see men in every avocation of life, from the most private to the most public transactions, willing enough to confess the right, but after all holding it subordinate to the ground from which they measure—worldly advantage. Thus when Christ comes to establish his heavenly kingdom in the world, marching for eighteen hundred years, sadly and slowly as when he carried his own cross; when he comes bringing his demands for justice, his clear shining requirements of love to God and to humanity, knocking at the doors of trade and of society, of churches and of senates, you find these men take up the exclamation: "This will never do; we are not prepared for it; it is all right, but it is an abstraction; we must take hold of those things which we know to be expedient, even though they may not be quite right."

Men think there is an advantage in this worldly pol-

icy. Men think they have found a great argument against the abolition of slavery because it doesn't work well in all things; and they refer to Jamaica. Suppose there had never been another grain of sugar made; suppose the island had sunk into the ocean, and every material interest had been swept away; the question is, was the act of emancipation right? That is the standard by which to measure the everlasting advantage of everything in this world. Right thunders at the doors of the Senate, but expediency answers, and pleads its end. Right moves man to do well in his trade, but interest tells him he can do better. He says, "I know I ought to do the right thing, but I must look out for my living in this world. I am placed in the midst of competitors. My neighbors on my right and on my left are underselling me, and if I do not make certain maxims of trade superior to Christian maxims, it will go down. These are men who measure from the ground of worldly sanction up to the supreme standard; if they can get hold of that and live by it they will be very glad; but if one of the two must come down, it must be God Almighty's law, and their worldly, temporal advantage must survive.

So with some men there is a distinction between the rule which should govern public, and that which should govern private action. They will do things in public, as a community, as a party, as a nation, that they would not do as individuals, nor think of doing. No man would think of stealing an apple from a boy

because he wants it, but men would steal a whole island because they want it, with a meanness just in proportion to the largeness of the theft. Why is this? Because men talk of an expediency in regard to public acts, concerning which they would not venture a lisp in regard to private ones, and make that the rule, rather than the supreme, eternal right.

Now a thing is either right or it is wrong. If we measure from God's supreme law, the love of the Father, we must bring everything else down before that; if we measure from worldly advantage, we must bring God's law down before that. Let us not make confusion here. I do not think that a man can immediately gain the whole right—can immediately spring from the position in which he stands, and do everything he would do. He is to do all he can do, but not for a moment do that which is wrong. There is a great difference between doing that which is right, though it is only partially done, and doing that which is positively wrong. There is never a moment in public or private action when we have a right to do a positive wrong; but there may be a time when we should all do the right we can, press toward it as fast as we can, take hold of the practical good, and strive for more. This holding half-way, while trying to go the whole way with the right, is very different from going on walking with the wrong because it is expedient.

Love not the world is the principle. In measuring the decalogue, we must take Christ's golden rule,

rather than the golden eagle. What the Apostle means by loving the world, and the things of the world, is, loving them supremely and making them a standard; measuring from the ground of worldly sanction and interest, up to the supreme right.

Sometimes men's compliance with the injunction in the text amounts simply to a negative—to not loving. A great many succeed in that—in not loving; that is about the essence of their lives and their religion. They do not love this, and they do not love that. They do not love this amusement; they do not love this kind of people; they do not love that class of Christians. The whole of their faith and righteousness is a sour asceticism. Their piety is ghastly; their philanthropy is mechanical; their love of souls is an effort, and not spontaneous—a galvanic twitch of the muscles, rather than the inspiration of the heart. When I contrast the loving Jesus, comprehending all things in his ample and tender charity, with those who profess to bear his name, marking their zeal by what they do not love, it seems to me as though men, like the witches of old, had read the Bible backward, and had taken incantations out of it for evil, rather than inspiration for good. Not loving—that is not the measure of the text. This self-conceited standard of our own righteousness—this sour, hateful, narrow asceticism, is just as much of the world as anything else. It is of the world, and does not answer to the requisition which is really set forth in the text.

No, my friends, we are to measure from the love of the Father downward—not from the love of worldly advantage and sanction upward. That is the real meaning of the text. Loving the Father supremely, we shall know what to love as he loves, and we shall see everything in the relation in which he sees it. From his all-comprehending affection we shall go forth to see everything truly, and to love everything as we ought to love it. Then we shall love the world of nature, because God Almighty made it; because it was pronounced by him very good; because it is a manifestation of his wisdom, of his power, of his constant beneficence. Our loving not the world will be not to love the evil, but to love the good—to be filled to overflowing with the Divine spirit. We shall then behold all nature as an outward expression of God's love—a continual offering to his name—the drapery of his manifestation—a temple filled with his own presence. We shall love the world of humanity; we shall love all good and right things, because we shall start from the love that is in him.

What do the Scriptures say of God's love? He so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son for it. Christ so loved man that he came to die for him. Surely there is no antagonism here—no collision of truths. When the Apostle says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," he certainly means that we shall understand him in accordance with the fact that God loved the world, and

so loved it that He sent His Son to die for it; that Christ did so love mankind that he poured out his precious blood and sacrificed his life for them. Does not this show you at once, that in order to properly understand the text we should start right? Start with the love of the Father, and you will love all things in their order, in their degree, in their proper relations. Start with the love of the world, and you will love things unwisely and falsely. You will hold the expedient superior to the right. You will often take the wrong when you should take the right. You will often love the evil when you should love the good. Start with the love of the Father, love Him supremely, and the world, and the things that are in the world, will fall into their proper place. Every daily duty, every daily care, every common interest—your homes, your toils, your trials, will all be loved by you in due proportion, because you will read in them the Father's meaning, and you will see them in their true relations and significance.

And still again: when we start from this ground of love we learn to distinguish the essence of things from the outside of things. We love the world and the things in the world in contrast to the love of the Father, when we love that which is external merely. When, for instance, a man becomes so enamored of nature that he forgets the God who made it; when all science is merely an accumulation of dead facts; when he looks upon nature in such a way that he feels that the

stone made God rather than God the stone; when all creation becomes to him nothing but mineral, vegetable, and animal matter; when death becomes an eternal sleep; when he sees not the foot-prints of the Almighty in the way-marks of Geology; when he touches not the pulses of the infinite in the motions of the worlds, but all is a dead blank and all traces of God have vanished, then man has that love of the world, and of the things that are in it, which is condemned by the Apostle.

So, too, a man may love humanity simply on its outside—for its advantage to him—merely for that which is pleasing to him, not in its essence. Jesus Christ did not look at the outside of men. He did not love humanity as high or low, rich or poor. He did not love it as turning toward him an aspect of kindness and friendliness, but as turning to him often an aspect of enmity and scorn. Men are ready enough in their protestations concerning humanity, ready enough to say how much they love the world at large, and yet they do not love a single individual enough to do as Christ did—to lay down their life for that individual. There is the test which he made of his supreme love—that he so loved his friends, nay, so loved his enemies, that he laid down his life for them. We admire the old classic story of Damon and Pythias, and consider it wonderful that a man was ready to lay down his life for another. We extol the patriot's love, and regard it as a noble thing he should pour out

his blood for the good of his country. We revere the martyr, and esteem it a glorious act that he will stand up amid the red flame and endure the terrible torture for the cause of truth. But, my friends, that is as far, I suppose, as humanity has ever gone, unless it is from the peculiar inspiration of Jesus Christ. He went further than this. He not only died for his friends, but he laid down his life for his enemies. He laid down his life for the very men that were piercing and crucifying him. He laid it down for denying Peter, for traitorous Judas, for men in all ages who have denied his name or rejected his love. There is the glory of Jesus Christ. He looked into humanity as a divine essence—an emanation from God. He saw it in its priceless worth and died for it—not for its relations to him of friendliness, or kindness, or love, or service, or beauty, or use, but for its intrinsic worth and preciousness.

That is the way to love humanity. Not because it serves us, not because it is pleasant to us, not because it is friendly to us. That is a very little thing. How sour men get by-and-by who love it on that account! The generous youth, who was ready to go to distant lands to serve humanity, by-and-by becomes a bitter misanthrope. He has no faith in the world, no trust in men. His nature becomes covered with a thick film of contempt and despair. Why? Simply because men have not turned out quite as good as he thought they would. Because they have often

turned toward him faces of coldness and scorn. Because he has often found friendship to be hollow, and protestations to amount to nothing. Because he has found men who opposed his interests. For these reasons he has turned away in disgust from his former position, from his generous philanthropy, from his confiding love, and has become a sour, carping skeptic and critic of humanity.

Not so with the true Christian—not so with the man that has the heart of Jesus Christ in him. He never falters in his high faith in, and deep love for, humanity, because he sees it and loves it as Jesus Christ did—not with reference to himself, but for its intrinsic character and value in the eyes of God.

So you see, when the Apostle says, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world," he means that we are not to love the outside of the world—the world in its external aspects—the sensuous and material forms of things. It is so in everything. It is so in regard to our occupations and our interests. What are we laboring for? The mere means of living? Health, pleasure, sensuous things; for themselves alone? Then comes the command to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." But if in our labor we recognize the great ends of this earthly discipline; if in our wealth we see its proper uses; if in our daily cares we behold their influence upon our better life, and try to lay hold of that, that is loving things in their essence rather than the outside.

Oh, my friends, it is a great thing for a man to know in what way he loves the world. That is the measure of all human character. Tossed on life's ocean, men may have to-day none of the usual means of observation—none of the usual tests by which they may know where they are drifting; they may be surrounded by a dense, dark fog. What must they do? They must resort to soundings—drop the line far down in the depths below, and judge from the soil that the lead brings up where they are. It is so in life. A man may be bewildered by false estimates of himself. He may not know where he is drifting or bound. It is a great thing for him, in such a situation, to sound his own heart, to drop the line of examination down deep within, and see what is there. And I repeat: the great test by which he may know where he stands in God's universe, is to know what he loves, and why he loves it.

Oh, look into your own heart. What is it you love most in this world? Not what you profess, not what you may seem to the world, but what is your great love? Do you love the outside of things—their sensuous aspect—wealth, fame, pleasure—the shell of this world that is fading away—the outsides of men, because they serve you? Or do you look upon things in the very vision of God, and love them for their essence? In order to love truly, we must first love the Father—get into accordance with his comprehensive affection—have his vision—see, in some sense, as he

sees—feel, in some degree, as he feels. Then we shall know how to love all things rightly. Drawn unto him by that love which he has shown for us—drawn to him by that manifested goodness in which he appears to us in every form of daily benefit, and especially in the character and life of Jesus Christ; drawn to him and loving him, we shall know how truly to love all things; and more than that, we may in some little degree learn to love him even as he has loved us.

It depends, then, upon where you start—the point of view from which you look—how you read this text. If you start from the love of the world, it will be to you a stumbling-block in the way of real religion; if you start from the love of the Father, it will be to you a help, showing you how to love all things truly, in the spirit of God, and with the great love that was in Jesus Christ.

LONGING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness ; for they shall be filled.—Matt. v. 6.

I CALL your attention this morning to one of the beatitudes as set forth in the text. In the present discourse we will consider two points—first, the condition of the beatitude ; and, second, its nature or result.

In the first place, then, consider the strong expressions used in the text. They convey an idea of the most intense desire and longing. The spiritual condition is represented by the most potent of the animal appetites—hunger and thirst—appetites that can not be subdued—that never can be completely overcome. A man may conquer or control all other inclinations ; he may succeed in almost extirpating them from his nature ; but these will assert their claims, and must be satisfied. No ascetic privation, no strenuous effort of the will, can lift a man into absolute superiority to the demands of hunger and thirst.

“Hunger,” says a recent writer, “is one of the beneficent and terrible instincts—the fire of life, underlying all impulses to labor, and moving men to noble

activities by its imperious demands. On the other hand, it subjects the humanity in man, and makes the brute predominate; it impels the most beneficent activities; it works the most terrible ferocities. Equally potent, and perhaps still more stringent in its impulses, is the sense of thirst."

You see, then, my friends, with what profound discrimination and with what exact propriety these terms were selected by Jesus as most exactly expressing the force and urgency of the desire set forth in this beatitude. First of all, he who would have the blessing promised in the text, must *want* righteousness—must long for it, as a hungry man longs for food, or a thirsty man for water. Now this tests the value of all mere superficial professions, of all outward conformity, to the rule of righteousness. It is not saying, I love God or desire goodness, that answers the condition of the beatitude. It is not embalming religion in a round of ceremonies, or holding it up before the intellect in the form of a creed, orthodox or heterodox. These are but superficial and cutaneous before the deep requisition, that righteousness shall be earnestly desired, longed for, hungered and thirsted for. In one word, the condition must accord with the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ, who said, "My meat and my drink is to do the will of Him that sent me." His disciples had gone into the city to buy meat to answer the ordinary demands of appetite, but so absorbed did he become in the love and service of his great mission, that even those demands,

imperious as they are, were forgotten, and he found a sustenance for his higher nature, and therefore for his entire nature, in doing the will of his Father who was in heaven. So must this desire be in us, over-mastering and all-absorbing, before we fulfill the condition of the beatitude.

But how can a man have this longing—how can he entertain this hunger and thirst—unless he perceives the greatness, the necessity, and the intrinsic worth of the thing desired?

Therefore it is well, as another condition of the beatitude, to consider what is meant here by righteousness. It is not merely the single virtue of justice or rectitude—in fact, no virtue is absolutely single, if we look at it closely. A man can not really have one virtue, and but one, genuine and complete. He can not have one without having all virtues and all graces, for no one virtue or grace is complete without the intermingling of the life and reciprocal action of all the rest. We make a great mistake if we suppose otherwise. There have been men who could play delightful music on one string of the violin, but there never was a man who could produce the harmonies of heaven in his soul by a one-stringed virtue. If we suppose there could be such things as isolated virtues, that a man could cherish one principle, and at the same time be corrupt in regard to another, we make an egregious mistake. Can a man be thoroughly and strictly honest, and at the same time be a selfish man? Can he be temperate

and at the same time unchaste—just, and yet unmerciful? So, if thoroughly analyzed, if rightly conceived in its essence, rectitude will stand for the significance of the word righteousness in the text. If we hunger and thirst for rectitude with all that rectitude implies, we should get at the essence of the thing brought before us. In reality, it means a state of mind and heart; a soil out of which all single virtues grow; the spirit of all virtues, of all moral excellence, rather than any particular form of virtue or moral excellence.

Then, again, it is not merely a desire to see righteousness prevailing in the world at large—a longing for righteousness to be done—although that is included. I suppose, in reality, we have in this expression, “righteousness,” or in the desire for it, the first three petitions in the Lord’s prayer—“Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” I suppose that a man who is longing for righteousness is longing for the fulfillment of these three branches of the prayer. Sometimes men in looking for righteousness are thinking merely of the social operation of it; its prevalence in the world at large; the reign of justice and of right between man and man. Sometimes men have been so absorbed in furthering this end and striving for it, that they may be said to have forgotten their own souls, and to have neglected their own salvation. They scorn any mean solicitude for themselves in their earnest care for the rectification of the world. But, after all, this is not

the essential point before us. It is the desire for a subjective personal condition of soul, not only for ourselves, but for all other men, if you please; because, if that prevails, then general or social righteousness will prevail. But essentially it is a desire for a subjective personal condition of soul; it is a desire not merely for doing righteously, but for being righteous. The man who has the longing suggested in the text, hungers and thirsts for conformity to the will of God. I do not know that there is any better generalization of the idea than that—the desire to be conformed to the will of God. In one word, the desire is to be like God.

And what is God? We have a distinct statement in the epistle of John of what God is—not merely what his attributes are, but what the essence of the divine nature is. We are told that He is love. So, then, we come to the conclusion that the man who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, hungers and thirsts after conformity to the will of God; for assimilation to the nature of God; hungers and thirsts for love or for goodness. That is the meaning of it. Blessed is the man who longs, who yearns, who desires, who hungers, who thirsts for goodness—goodness that is intrinsic and essential to the nature of God himself.

But in order that this desire may be enkindled within us, we must of course see in what that intrinsic goodness consists. The divine goodness in us must be realized by us; because, as I said in the commencement, this is

not a mere saying that we wish to be good. It is not possible for a man to fulfill the conditions of this beatitude, unless he really sees what this desirable goodness in God is, so that he may hunger and thirst for it. Now that goodness we can trace of course everywhere. We behold it in one form or another wherever we turn our eyes; for the fact is, that all truth is identical with goodness. Every manifestation of God in the natural world, if we can get at the core and essence of it, is identical with goodness. The two things are inseparable. And so wherever we look—at any arrangement of the universe, at any procession of phenomena, at any thing which proceeds immediately from the divine—there we see what the divine goodness is.

But that is not enough. There has been set before us a complete standard of that goodness. We have in Jesus Christ the expression of it in its fullness and essence. We can not trace it, perhaps, always in the material world; sometimes we must halt, compare, and analyze, before we can see the meaning of things. There are anomalies in natural facts which can not be reconciled. We have not penetrated to the core and essence of many dark mysteries. The man of faith has no doubt that these things are essentially good, and that the darkest shadow that falls upon man involves essential blessedness; but he does not see it. In Jesus Christ, without a cloud, the goodness of Almighty God stands before us. Directly in the personality of Christ Jesus, without a cloud, a flaw, or a break, we see that

goodness which is at the heart of things, and by which all things are ordained and made.

Can any man deny that in the goodness of Jesus Christ there is a divine attraction for the affections of his heart and a call for the surrender of his will? Can you, putting aside all theological conceits, putting aside all vague notions which have been engendered in your minds by education, looking at that character of Jesus Christ as it stands distinctly presented on the page of the New Testament, fail to love it? Oh, we give such a theological sense to our words, that even the holiest precepts ring like counterfeit coin. But if we really knew that to love Jesus Christ is like loving anything else, if theological or religious love would only mean natural love as it ought to mean, then there is no one here who would not say, "I love Jesus Christ." Infidels and skeptics, carping at miracles and cutting out one half of the New Testament, if they could see such a character as that, exemplified in such a beautiful life, standing in the gloriousness of its meekness and majesty of its holiness, they would come to it as if drawn by the law of attraction.

Is it not singular that such a portraiture as that is presented to us, when we consider in what a broken way it comes? The Gospels are very fragmentary. We make a mistake when we apply the laws of criticism to them as we do to a great history like that of Thucydides or Grote. They are mere fragments—mere memoirs, serving for a history, so to speak; a

few sketches, here and there, of Jesus Christ. And yet is it not remarkable that these sketches, so combined as they lie before us upon the page, present to us that perfect portraiture of moral goodness and spiritual loveliness? We can not suppose that to be a fiction. No man could have invented Jesus Christ; no man could have made a being who presents such a universal idea of goodness as to attract all hearts in all ages. There must have been some overshadowing reality to produce so bright a reflection. There it stands, that glorious portraiture; and I repeat, the goodness we should hunger after is that embodied in Jesus Christ, who we all confess is a being to be loved.

A great many people in their religious experience tell us that they have seen the time when, looking upon God as an awful being, with a background of immense sovereignty, shrouded in darkness, they have wished that God was only like Jesus Christ, and that such a love controlled and governed the universe; and they have gone to Jesus Christ as something to save them from the wrath of God. Oh, what a terrible, dark fact that is, lying at the core of some of our theologies! Jesus Christ is regarded as the shield that quenches the thunderbolts of God's wrath; as one who saves us from God, instead of what he represents himself to be—a being who leads us to God. Jesus Christ is but the reflection of the Divine love. There is nothing tender in him who blessed little children—there is nothing lovely in him who walked so kindly among the sorrows and wrongs

of humanity—there is nothing that attracts us to the heart of him who sat at the marriage feast in Cana, who mingled with the poor and suffering, who cleansed the leper and raised the dead—there is nothing in all that love that draws us to him, that is not in the Father's nature. If we only could see God's love, and realize it as expressed in Jesus Christ, we could not help longing for it, and praying that such, according to the finite capacity of our nature, might be the essence of our spiritual being.

But men do not realize the goodness of God. As I have just told you, their creeds shut it out from them; they get a creed-view of God—a sharp, metaphysical, horrible notion of a God anxious to be just, and yet obliged, so to speak, to pour out his wrath somewhere; or else they get crude conceptions of a God formed out of their sensual ignorance. In the Hartz Mountains, in Germany, men sometimes see an awful, shadowy, colossal image, walking over the heights like a majestic demon; but, after all, they find it is only the projection of themselves; only the shadow of the advancing man thrown upon the mist of the mountain. So men in their superstition, sensuality, and gross idolatry, project a God who is only the shadow of themselves. For the best we can do, after all, is to mingle our ideas of God with something of ourselves. We can not rid ourselves of this. But there is, nevertheless, this in our nature, that when the true idea of God is presented to our mind, we

recognize it as such. I repeat: Man is so constituted, that in forming a notion of God, that notion, however beautiful and excellent it be, will be flawed and blunted with some misconception; and yet let the true idea of God come before him, and he will recognize it. So in relation to Jesus Christ; men in their sensuality and darkness, as in the heathen world, and in the moral heathenism of the present day, make a God after their own notion and sensuality; but when Christ comes, the living perception of the true God wakes up in them, and they see what he is.

So men have a God in science—an intellectual God—a first cause—the cause of all causes, the mover of all motions. It is true no man can pursue a scientific investigation of the universe with clear eyes and a right heart without seeing goodness in every phenomenon. They see that God is not merely intelligence, but love. That is the demonstration of science as well as the utterance of the gospel. But men do come to look upon God as simply the great cord that binds together the separate fagots. Indeed, some say we have nothing to do with first causes; that science has to do with phenomena only, and we must not attempt to penetrate the mystery with which first causes are shrouded. But, in some way or other, men can not rid themselves of the idea that God is hidden in these, and, in consequence of their creeds and educational notions, they contrive to throw him into the dark, awful background, and to see nothing but the goodness that is in Jesus Christ, and long for

that. But the goodness of Christ is the goodness of God himself; and when that becomes clearly revealed, when we get a measure of the fullness of that excellence, when we see what that all-embracing love is, then we can not help longing for it. We shall hunger and thirst for it—hunger and thirst for it for its own sake; for this is the righteousness essentially presented to us in the beatitude of the text.

Such, then, being the condition of this beatitude, let us in the next place consider its nature or result. We have just considered what the object to be desired is. Now what is the result of that hunger and thirst—not the arbitrary consequence, but the inevitable law; For, as from time to time I have urged the truth contained in the beatitudes before you, I have insisted upon this as the central point: that all the blessings promised are not arbitrary, but are legal—they come by law; it is so that we can not help having this result. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall [they must] inherit the earth; blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven; blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall [they must] be filled.” It is the law—the inevitable law, in the case. The result is, that he who truly hungers for righteousness or goodness shall be filled with righteousness or goodness. This is the nature of the blessing. He shall be filled with the very thing he desires.

This brings us to consider a little the statement I made just now, that goodness is to be sought for its own

sake—not for something else—not for something done. We are to hunger and thirst after righteousness for righteousness' sake, and the blessing promised to us is, that we shall be filled with it. Now that strikes at a great many religious works and religious experiences and thoughts, because in reality a great many, I am afraid, are not hungering for righteousness and goodness, but for the rewards of righteousness and goodness. A system of rewards and punishments is the highest conception they get of the essential glory, grandeur, and obligation of religion. They are thirsting after heaven—after a good hereafter, in reward for the sacrifices they make in this world. They are carrying this world into the other. It is the old system—so much per cent. on everything you invest—projected out of Wall Street into the New Jerusalem. Is this the principle of the divine kingdom? Is this the feeling of men who have really known what it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness? Did Paul in his imprisonment and bondage, with stripes and scars upon him, look merely for some payment from God by-and-by? No; in his storm-dashed ship, in his lonely wanderings, in the dungeon at Philippi, he sang praises, rejoiced, pressed forward, and felt that in the very effort of seeking for righteousness and assimilation to the spirit of Jesus Christ he had his reward.

And this was the case with every great and true man that ever lived and labored in the spirit of Christ Jesus. Luther, as he sought to reform a corrupt religion;

Clarkson, as he rolled on the wheels of emancipation, and every good man, toiling and suffering martyrdom, sometimes has found in the joy of doing righteousness the reward of having that righteousness. They felt what it is to be filled with the blessedness set before us in the text. Seeking heaven through righteousness is not seeking righteousness, but something else; it is not loving goodness for goodness' sake, but for its rewards. We are to seek God, not heaven—to strive to be righteous, not happy. That is eternal life. What a mistake there is in the interpretation of this phrase! Eternal life, as some people think, is merely life without end—protracted existence—striking harp-strings, singing hallelujahs, walking golden streets, reclining on the banks of the river of life, casting down crowns before the Lamb, always having the blessed joy of existence, continually having some good that comes in consequence of actions done by them in this world. Is that eternal life? or is it merely duration? That is not the idea. It is not the idea conveyed in the misinterpreted phrase, everlasting life and everlasting punishment. The idea of duration is not the main point there; it is substance, not duration—spiritual condition, not protracted time. What does Christ say in the chapter I read this morning? “He that believeth on me, *hath* everlasting life,” not shall have it by-and-by. “This is life eternal.” What—to go to heaven? No; “this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” And until

we come to that idea, we grossly misinterpret the Scriptures. Eternal life is spiritual substance, present and incident to the possessor. In other words, it is the very righteousness set before us in the text. That is it. We have it now; we have it when we assimilate to ourselves the goodness and excellence of God. And whatever other promises may convey, whatever of outward good they may actually bestow, all the essence, all the good is embraced in this righteousness.

Suppose a man, for instance, pursuing a course of virtue, a course of temperance, or of rectitude, has the promise that he shall be wealthy, and that he shall have long life—shall make a fortune, and shall be respected. That is all very good; but what is the essence of all this? It is in being righteous; that is the great blessing. So that if you have a long life, it is a righteous life; and if you have wealth, it is righteous wealth, as you make a righteous use and disposition of it. With this, any condition is blessed; without it, no condition is blessed. So the essence of all promises is in the possession of this intrinsic righteousness.

So you see, my friends, again, how true it is that man shall be filled. There is great significance in that expression, “filled;” or, as it may be translated, “satisfied.” “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Now nothing could more emphatically express the peculiar character of man—a creature who needs to be filled, needs something that will satisfy—a being of an im-

mortal, limitless nature. It is a great thing sometimes in this world, when you are going to make a present to a person, to know what will exactly suit that person's tastes or wants. A toy that will delight a little child, will not please one who is older. That which will please this kind of a man, will not suit that. To get the exact thing, therefore, that will satisfy the peculiar taste or want of a person, constitutes the great value of the gift, rather than its cost. Now, Jesus Christ knows, when he makes the promise, exactly what man wants. Man wants to be filled; he wants something that will satisfy. Man's peculiarity above all other beings is this ever-restless seeking after something. Not only the wicked are like the troubled sea that can not rest, but humanity itself is in some respects like it. A great deal of the glory of man comes out of this restlessness. He can not be content with the present condition, nor with stagnation. And this is the glory and hope of things, even in the darkest hour. We often think, when things are very bad, that they can not remain so, because man is so constituted, that he can not rest contented with them. All achievements and plans of action come out of this restlessness. But, being thus constituted, there is only one thing that can satisfy man, and that is righteousness—goodness. That is the only thing that can fill him, strengthen him, and make him complete at any time, under all conditions.

I need not make a recapitulation of that which man's

experience continually verifies, that no man ever was satisfied with worldly good. And this is no ascetic, or puritanical, or pharisaical admonition in reference to worldly good. No man of common sense condemns the good of this world that is really good—that which has not evil in itself or in its use—which does not lead directly to evil. The fair light, the blessed air, social enjoyment—each of these is good in its place. No man of common sense condemns these, or speaks of worldly good, in itself, as something that is forbidden and sinful. Not at all. But there is one thing to be said of the best form of worldly good. It may be good; it may be innocent; it may be useful; it is all right in its place, but it can not satisfy. That is the whole of it; it can not fill up the depth of your nature.

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes felt this. He went all through with the world in some of its evil, as well as its better phases, perhaps. He had everything it could give. I do not believe that, in our age of railroads and telegraphs, we have more means of worldly enjoyment than Solomon had, or he who speaks for him—the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes—and after going all through with it, in the end he was compelled to say, not with any morbid pharisaic disposition, but as the result of a higher spirit, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” It could not satisfy, it could not fill him. There are moments when every man feels it; there are moments when that which is immortal in his nature will assert itself, and that which grav

itates to higher things will make itself known. Something is taken from us—sometimes a thing that is familiar and dear to us. Then we feel that all this world's good is insufficient to make up its loss. Take away the health of a man who has all his days been permitted to have the regular beat of his pulse, the kindly glow of his blood, the free and full respiration of his lungs, and let some little muscle be paralyzed, or some pain settle within him, and what is the good of all this world? Unless he can go within himself, and there find resources, how is it all darkened, and rendered terrible!

A dear friend, a child, is taken away. All things else become valueless or secondary. Sometimes this is a morbid state, but we feel as if it were true. It is a great lesson, teaching us that this world is not the highest good, when a bereavement of that kind will make all other things secondary.

I was much struck in reading about a nobleman who died a few days since. He had an iron safe, or chest, all locked up, but marked: "To be removed first, in case of fire." When he died, his friends opened that chest, supposing, of course, that some valuable document, or deed of property, rich jewelry, or costly plate, would be found in it. But what did they find? They found the toys of his little child, who had gone before him. Richer to him were they than all the world's wealth, richer than his coronet; brighter than all the jewels that sparkled on its crest.

Not his estate, not his jewels, not his equipage, nothing glorious and great in this world; but the dearest objects to him were the toys of his little child.

Thus we see that worldly good is secondary—that it can not satisfy. So it is with intellectual attainment. From its very nature it gives us no rest, and was not meant to give it. It is the glory of the intellect, that it is always panting and longing for some higher thing; always wanting to soar; always seeking to gain some more lofty eminence. “Excelsior” is the continual watchword of the intellect, and it was meant to be so. It is its very essence and power that we can not rest contented with present attainment. But then there are times when we are not all intellect. There never was a man all intellect, but just in proportion as men become so, they become like those higher mountains of the earth—all ice and snow as they rise above the warm heart of the earth. But man is not all intellect. He has feeling; he has times of weakness. Though he may solve great mathematical problems, he suffers, he pines, he needs help and sympathy; for all the truth that is gathered in the bright realms of intellect do not satisfy. There is only one thing that will, and Jesus Christ saw it. Goodness will satisfy. Not that a man will be satisfied with what goodness he attains at present. He is always seeking for it; and as he seeks, it is sure to come, sure to meet him. Just as he desires, the measure is filled up. That is the one thing that will satisfy—a thing that he can

fall back upon. That can not be taken away from him.

You remember the story of the old man who had forgotten the names of his children, and the names of his early friends, long buried and slumbering in the church-yard. They tried to arouse him, and awaken his recollection by some association, to bring to him the life to which he clung like an old leaf in the early winter. They mentioned name after name, but to no effect, until that of Jesus Christ was mentioned, when he said, "Yes, I remember that name."

Goodness is the last thing that goes out of a man. He loses his intellect and his bodily vigor, but if he has been true and good, his goodness does not forsake him. There is something vital and enduring in that; it will remain when everything else is taken away. When we can get nothing else, we can have goodness and righteousness. We may be deprived of the opportunities of enjoyment; sickness may be upon us; the bright sunlight may be shut out; spring-time may come with its heraldry of flowers, and we may not be permitted to enjoy the glorious sight; but we can have goodness in the dark, sick chamber. Intellectual privileges may be denied us; we may be forbidden to read and write, or to do anything, and yet the goodness of God-Almighty will continue to flow. It may be that we can not do anything; that the world must rush on, unaided by our help; that in the great vineyard which is spread out, we can not work; but

we can serve God still; we can suffer and take inflictions patiently, and there is no condition where we can not be satisfied in the enjoyment of righteousness.

This is the end, then, which we are to seek in all conditions, and by all means. That is the point; righteousness is the principal thing. It is not one special form; if it had been, other good things in this world would have been neglected. Suppose righteousness had been the doing of some one thing, then men would have neglected their business, their daily cares, their ordinary relationship, to rush and to do that one thing. That is the way it has been misconceived by some; it has been considered by some as one thing—a form, a pilgrimage, a round of prayers, a shutting ourselves up from the world.

Yes, thank God, you can hunger and thirst after righteousness. If you are driving a nail, planing a board, selling a piece of cloth, doing any kind of work, hunger and thirst after righteousness. In all that you are doing, hunger and thirst after righteousness. Oh, what a blessed thing is that! And remember there is no warrant that we shall have anything else than this in this world. You have no assurance of life, happiness, health, or reputation; but you may be sure you shall have goodness if you seek it. It is true in one sense, as one has well said, that whatever we would have, we can take if we pay for it—good or evil. There is a law of that kind: "Seek, and ye shall find." We can have it, but we must pay for it. You

can have pleasure, but you must pay for it in a wasted life, a ruined or impaired nature. You can have wealth, but you must pay for it, perhaps, in honorable, drudging service, or, as many have paid for it, in a blasted reputation. But you are not sure even in regard to these things. It is by no means certain when you have your wealth or reputation, that you will enjoy it. Something may come in to prevent it. But there is one thing certain—one thing which can not fail you, but can give you unending and inalienable joy. In Christ's words you hear what it is, and all men who have responded to those words in holy effort, corroborate what he has said—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

LIFE IN CHRIST.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.—John vi. 57.

OUR Saviour, in many instances, taught the truth in such a way as not only to instruct the hearts of those who gathered around him, but to test their dispositions. Those among his hearers who were in spiritual sympathy with him, whose instincts and desires were truthful, would be incited to penetrate the mystery or the symbolism of his language, and where they did not distinctly see all its meaning, they would feel its general purport ; while there were others gathered around him, who, even seeing, would not perceive—who, hearing, would not understand, because they grasped only the literal meaning of the teacher's words, and interpreted them by their pre-conceptions. Such appears to have been the case in the instance connected with the text. Christ had described himself as the bread that came down from heaven, and in the intensity of the illustration suggested by the idea, he had urged upon his hearers the vital necessity of partaking of his flesh and of his blood. Upon this, many of his

disciples exclaimed, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" and some of them, turning away, followed him no more. But others, though they may not have comprehended all his meaning, felt that what he said was profoundly true—was fitted to their deepest wants; and when Jesus asked them, "Will ye also go away?" they replied, through the lips of Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Thus, then, those whose minds and hearts were not essentially disposed toward truth, stumbled at language which bade them eat the flesh and drink the blood of him who spoke to them; but to those who sought the substance of the truth involved in that symbolism, the Saviour himself furnished the key, for he told them not to take his words grossly and literally. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," said he; "the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

It seems, my friends, that this text, especially the latter clause of it—while I do not wish to say anything that looks like a play upon words—suggests two or three important points for consideration. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." In the first place, we live by Jesus Christ. I refer you to the statement that I have just made in interpreting what I am about to say. The material simile of eating Jesus, and living by him, unfolds a vital and spiritual meaning. I need not tell you how strangely this phraseology has been misconstrued. We know that one great

section of the Christian body has built up upon it the stupendous doctrine of transubstantiation; and around this nucleus, the literal interpretation of the words of Jesus, has been constructed a gorgeous and awful ceremonial. We can hardly ever look upon that great church, I think, without respect and admiration for many things, when we see how its cathedrals are dotting a thousand lands, and hear its litanies chanted around the globe. But we think, also, amid the gorgeous ceremonies, pealing psalms, and fumes of the censer, there are hundreds and thousands who now believe that the process is now going on of transmuting the literal bread into the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ—so strangely have these words been interpreted, such a vital and cardinal doctrine has been made out of them, and so widely have they been believed in this sense.

And yet, while we discard this literal interpretation, let me be permitted to observe that the symbolism in the text is an exact symbolism. In other words, it is as true that we need spiritually to assimilate Christ to ourselves, as that we need physically to assimilate material substance to our bodily organism, in order that our animal existence may be maintained. And we shall perceive this truth as soon as we understand what in the profoundest sense life is, or what it is to live.

“He that eateth me, shall live by me.” What is it to live? I observe that anything truly lives when it

fills up the capacities of its being; and anything is dead, just in proportion as its faculties or functions are inoperative. When, in the frame of an animal, pulsation ceases, and the breath is gone, we say of it that it is dead, although, as mere matter, that frame is alive with energy. Life in the animal does not consist merely in material force, but in organic vitality; and, therefore, we regard the distinct force of the organic vitality, and if that is gone, although the material forces operate, it is dead. But in man we rise to a still higher grade. We see in him not only material force and organic vitality, but an element of spiritual existence. He has within him that which the brute has not—this element of spiritual existence. Surely, then, man does not really live—is not alive to the full extent of his being, when he exists only as an animal—has only breath and pulsation, sense and appetite. Some may call this living, and think it is living. It may be all they comprehend in their idea of being alive—perhaps it is all they have ever known of living—but no man can be largely self-conscious—no man can look into his own nature and trace the deep lines of his own experience, and then think that all life consists in this mere animal, organic form of living.

And here comes up the old, everlasting fact—old, yet always new, always fresh in its suggestion—that man is not, like the brute, satisfied with meat and drink, but has faculties which overleap all sensual indulgence. When we are appalled by the spectacle of universal

decay ; when for a moment we start back at the phenomenon of death, seeing those we live with, and with whom we are associated, dropping around us like autumn leaves ; when our vision fails to penetrate beyond the dark boundary that limits the horizon of this life, we always fall back with great confidence and assurance upon the thought, that there are in man faculties that the material objects of this life do not satisfy ; there are within him powers that develop beyond the limitations and resources of this life. We look around upon nature, and see all other creatures filling up the full orbit of their being, every faculty employed—every desire satisfied. There is the air, through which the free wings of the bird may beat ; there is the sunshine that awakens the joyousness of its song ; there is everything adapted to it, to call out the fullness and glory of its being. Man alone is the unsatisfied one ; man alone yearns for that which is higher—that which is beyond. But assured that there is harmony in the universe, we say that there must be something more than the animal and material, something more than meat and drink. Almost all men feel this. I say almost all men, because there are spiritual idiots as well as intellectual idiots. There are men, I mean, whose whole spiritual nature seems totally dead ; who, perhaps, may have no throbbing instinct of a higher life—no sense of spiritual being ; but taking men in their normal condition, I repeat, every man has some sense of this higher life within him demanding some-

thing better and more exalted than the objects of this outward world.

I speak of the deep consciousness of men. Man is concentric; you have to take fold after fold off of him before you get to the center of his personality. His clothing sometimes makes up a great deal of him; then comes his skin—the color of it; then his muscle; then his shape; and lastly his skeleton, and this makes up his material status and position. You have got to get below his animal nature, habits, customs, affections, daily life, and sometimes go away down into the heart of the man, before you know what is really in him. But when you get there, you will find the testimony true which I am urging. So far as we can judge men by their outward appearance, a great many of them live merely for the meat and drink. They are satisfied perfectly with that which this life gives them. Some of them, indeed, compel us to fear this most appalling fact: that their circumstances are such that the actual necessities of this life afford them scarcely an opportunity to show a higher yearning. They can not lift up their heads and breathe the free air of the world; they can not look over the limits of their necessities. It is not the mere external condition of men that we should mourn over; it is not poverty; it is not a hard state of living; but the condition which is connected with such a state in which men, for their daily bread alone, for their immediate imperious necessities, are compelled so to live, so to overwhelm

themselves with the wants and cares of this life, that they can hardly manifest or develop any faculty for something higher.

But however this may be, if you go down into the center of men's souls, if you get into the last core of these concentric rings of personality, you find this sense of the infinite, this consciousness of immortality, linked to something higher and better. You pass every day men in the street, you meet every day with acquaintances, you consort every day with intimate friends, and you do not know how deeply this feeling may prevail in them. You have no right to question the religious feeling of a man as manifested by him because it does not accord perfectly with your ideas. You have no right to question the religiousness of his soul because his form of expressing it is not like yours. You can not tell what solitary hours he has, what great and awful realities, what profound experiences stir the depths of his soul. No doubt nine out of ten, ay, ninety-nine out of a hundred, have this spirit-yearning, which proves to us, as I have said, that man needs something to live for more than meat and drink and earthy conditions.

My friends, if you should take the human heart and listen to it, it would be like listening to a sea-shell; you would hear in it the hollow murmur of the infinite ocean to which it belongs, from which it draws its profoundest inspiration, and for which it yearns. Man, then, has a higher nature, which must have its ali-

ment, its food, or practically and essentially that nature dies. It is the peculiarity of Christianity that it announces this truth. Perhaps if there is one central fact of Christianity, one peculiarity upon which it is based, more than all others, it is this: that it has made man conscious of his inward life; it has shown to each man the immortality of his own soul. It is one thing to believe, as some philosophers do, speculatively, in immortality; to reason out a future life, like Plato or Cicero. It is another thing for each man to feel his own immortality; to be conscious of the spiritual essence of his own inward nature. And this was what Christianity did. It gave to men a profound conviction of their own spiritual being. They realized it as they never realized it before. They were convinced of it and knew it. It was to them that Jesus Christ addressed himself. This was the reason why he looked below the outward conditions, why he consorted with the publican and sinner as with the scribe and pharisee. This was the reason why the Samaritan was as precious to him as the Jew; why he died for all, and not for some. He saw the spiritual nature of man in all its priceless capacity, in all its quenchless immortality, and to that he spoke, to that he addressed himself when he bade his hearers eat of his flesh and drink of his blood, saying, "He that eateth me, shall live by me."

Each kind or nature in the universe is linked in its own chain of dependencies. The body depends on

things material, and those things material in turn have a material source. Were it not for the unmistakable lineaments which they present, and were we to consider nothing but the material phenomena of nature, we might say that this perhaps is true; that matter only proves the existence of matter. But the moment we look upon the soul of man—that which is deepest and most peculiar, that which distinguishes him from all animal existence, that which constitutes his humanity—we must ascribe it to some higher source than matter. You may possibly suppose that this curiously-molded body, this harp of a thousand strings, this manifold organization, had a material origin; but you can not think that the affection of the human heart is born of the dust; you can not think that the yearning for the beautiful and good which springs up in the soul of man comes merely out of the slime of matter, or out of the abyss of our mere sensual nature. Whence comes love so mighty, breathing in every heart; whence the gravitation and attraction of the social world, if not from loving sources? Whence comes the intelligence of man? You can not suppose that to have sprung from the dust, simply by the conditions of material nature. Whence comes mounting and deathless thought that soars beyond the highest stars and seeks the unities of nature? Surely you can not suppose that this, the crown of man's nature, has all come from dust and ashes. And whence man's sense of sin, his consciousness of moral freedom, the deep,

earnest breathings of conscience? Whence come they? Are they the suggestions of a nature that has sprung from the dust, and returns back to nothingness? If you could take away every other proof of the existence of a God; if you could blot out the universe with all its glorious elements of harmony, order, and wonder; yet, looking into the deep soul of man, and beholding there a sense of sin, a feeling of obligation, of duty, of responsibility, you would be compelled to say, this soul of man proves the existence of a moral, intelligent source over and above the material world.

Each thing is linked to things of its own kind. The soul of man, living, intelligent, and morally conscious, is linked to an intelligent and moral God, and by him and in him alone can it live. The soul of man, this intelligent, this living, this moral nature of man, can not link itself to mere sensation and matter—can not live merely by material things—by the world's wealth, its fame—by meat, drink, ease, and raiment. It depends for its development, for its noblest action, for its highest end, upon communion with the infinite intelligence, love, and freedom from which it came.

Now Jesus Christ came to bring mankind into communion with that infinite intelligence, love, and freedom, by bringing man's soul into communion with himself, so that living in Jesus Christ, we might live in the Father, and living by Jesus, we might be brought into communion with our highest life and highest possibilities. As Christ becomes assimilated to our inner

spiritual being, so we truly live. There is no vagueness about this at all. It is the simple statement of the truth. When Jesus says, "I came to reveal the Father; I came to bring you to life in me, and in the Father," he utters no vague, mysterious truth. He came to bring our nature, our spiritual being, into communion with himself, that, by communing with himself, we might commune with God, and thus truly live.

Each thing, I repeat, lives according to its kind; the heart by love, the intellect by truth, the higher nature of man by intimate communion with God, the infinite source and origin of life and truth, and it is Christ alone who brings us into full communion with the Father. By what else are we brought into such contact with God? Nature reveals God to us, shows us the work of the Almighty, inspires us with some dim consciousness of the greatness of God; but to know the love of God, to be intimate with the beatings of that infinite heart, to be brought into the full glory of that all-embracing, intelligent freedom and love, we can only come by Jesus Christ. No other thing, no other object, stands before to effect this purpose. It is not by our own reason that we can be brought fully into communion with God, though we may feel after him, if haply we may find him. It is not by scientific truth that we can find him, except in one aspect. We can only feel, and be brought into communion with the essence of God, which is love, as we come into com-

munion with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Therefore, speaking of our highest, truest, undying life, it is true, as Jesus said, that he who eateth him—that is, he who assimilates his spirit—lives by him in the highest and noblest sense of living.

But look at another point which the last clause of this text presents. We not only live in Jesus, but we live by him. “He that eateth me, shall live by me.” That brings particularly into view the essential personality of Jesus Christ. Those phrases in the New Testament which dwell so much upon the personality of Christ Jesus, where he says, for instance, “I am the bread that came down from heaven;” “I am the way, the truth, and the life;” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;” “He that believeth in me hath everlasting life”—those phrases we should not be afraid of interpreting too literally. If you look at them, they are very wonderful and peculiar in the scheme of Christianity. There never was any other teacher that spoke in such a way. Neither Plato, Confucius, nor any of the wise men of antiquity ever said, “I am the truth.” They may have said, “Believe in this principle, this truth,” but never, “I am the truth, the way, the life; believe in me.” There is something very peculiar in this personality of Christ—this conscious personality. It means something; it is the peculiar essence of Christianity. In this very form of statement, Christ is brought into personal prominence, and stands before the world, not merely as a moral

teacher or revealer of truth, but as a Saviour. The way in which he saves us is not merely by the truth revealed, but by himself. We are brought into contact with the spirit and personality of Jesus Christ himself. This is something more than believing a doctrine about Jesus Christ. Doctrines are valuable when they are vital. When you get the truth taught by Jesus Christ vitalized in your soul, and you practice it in your life, it becomes efficacious and powerful; but when you merely give assent to it, there is no efficacy nor power in it. To assent to a creed, and say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ whom he has sent, and in the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit"—what does that amount to? It is simply an assent that is sacramental in its character; you might as well think of being saved by having a piece of Christ's garment, or of the wood of the cross, as by giving an intellectual assent to creeds and forms. But to believe in him is to precipitate your soul upon him. That is the only way to manifest your belief, and the only way in which a man is saved. There is no real belief when a man says one thing and acts the contrary. When he says, I ought to do so and so, and does it, then he believes it; but when he says, I ought to do so and so, and does not do it, then he does not believe it. So, I repeat, in regard to Jesus Christ; when we believe in him, we precipitate our souls upon him; we bring him into communion with ourselves; we assimilate him to ourselves; we eat and drink him.

There is no language which could express the meaning better than that, because to eat and drink are terms that are coupled with the intimate assimilation of a thing.

What is it to believe in Jesus Christ? Is it to believe that he is the second person of the Trinity, or that he pre-existed? Is it to believe in dogmas in regard to the atonement, and in the fall of man, from which he delivers us? To believe in Christ is to believe in him as the way, the truth, and the divine life; to believe that in him is the substance of all spiritual excellence; to believe that his life is the best life, and ought to be ours, and to transfer it to ourselves. "This is eternal life: to know thee, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." I touched upon that last Sabbath morning. I told you the great thing, after all, was the substance of spiritual being, not the question of duration in the matter of eternal life. "He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life"—not *shall* have it; not shall go to heaven and wear a crown of glory, and cast it down before God, through all the ages of eternity; not shall be saved from hell; but he that believes in me, *hath* now everlasting life. How dare you put that everlasting life the other side of the grave, dividing it off as by a sharp fence? We have it now. All considerations of time and eternity are canceled in this profound spiritual realization. If any man asks me how I interpret certain texts that speak of eternal life and punishment, I answer thus: They

do not refer to duration, but to spiritual substance. A man is in everlasting punishment when he is in sin, but he is in eternal life when he is in Jesus Christ; and that is a process going on now and forever, here and hereafter, in this world and the other; not shut off by any sharp division of the grave, not put far off into the other world. The soul that sins, dies; in the day that it eats, it dies.

Oh, that we could look more at the substance of the thing, and not at place and duration! We are saved as we are assimilated to Christ the Lord, as our spirit becomes like his, as we eat and drink of him. Saved from what? Not merely from punishment, not merely from the consequences of transgression. Alas! that men should be forever dodging consequences; that they should care for nothing but the consequences, but would wallow in sin, would run a career of vice, would live meanly and basely in the lowest kennels of debauchery if it were not for the consequences. What a mean, low conception of what man ought to be! Be afraid of sin, not the consequences; of alienation from God, not the consequences. Be afraid of not eating and drinking Jesus Christ, until you become one with him, not the consequences. Pray to be saved from sin, not from punishment. Pray to be saved from your selfish self—from the appetites that drive you with headlong velocity to destruction—from the abasement that removes you from communion with God. Pray to be saved from the corruption that is in the heart. Come

to Jesus Christ; eat and drink of him till he becomes one with you, and thus are you saved.

And oh, in this great truth, how much controversy would vanish! how much of the essential meaning of Christian sects would come out! Here, after all, is the bond of communion of the Christian Church; not in dogmas about Christ Jesus; not in doctrines concerning his nature; not in interpretations of the schemes of the Almighty in the gospel, but in Christ Jesus himself.

If ever there arises—as I verily believe there will—a church broad as the earth, ample as the free spirit of God Almighty, and glorious as the truth that came from heaven, a church of devout men and free minds, a church that shall not be hedged in by intellectual limitations, but bound only by one great cord of unity, that cord will be union with Christ Jesus. Then meeting with him, taking hold of him, touching him, we shall come together. Oh, these crooked roads of diversity through which the sects have wandered! these briers and thorns of controversy! these weary speculations! Come out of them; come to the center from which you have diverged, and you shall meet Jesus Christ—Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian, Universalist. We may not agree in a statement about him, but believing in him, and touching him, we shall all be one.

But there is one other point suggested in the text, “He that eateth me, shall live by me.” This is a statement of present living. It gives us the idea of

actual, steady, habitual living—not merely going to live—not living for Jesus Christ, but by Jesus Christ. And this, I think, is the great peculiarity of genuine religion. It is an end, not a means. It is not something that helps us to live by-and-by, but something by which we live now. Men talk of living for heaven, living for eternal things, all by-and-by. Put aside this little indulgence now, and you shall get something in heaven; be very humble now, and you will be radiant with glory hereafter. It is all coming by-and-by; we would like to have it now, but if we deny ourselves of it here, we shall indulge in it freely hereafter. This is the substantial idea, though I may have stated it uncouthly. Now religion is living according to the truth now—heaven now, heaven always; gradations, if you please, higher than the stars, mounting upward to brighter spheres of action; but religion in its bliss and glory, heaven in its essence now, and not merely hereafter.

My friends, the great essential things are those we live by. The great things of life are the things we live by—that we must have day by day. Bread—are we living for it merely, or by it? The water that gushes from the rock, flows over the land, and baptizes the world with blessings; are we living for it or by it? Are we living for air, or by air, for light, or by light? Then ask whether we should live for religion, or by it, for heaven, or by it, for Jesus Christ, or by him. The intellect lives by knowledge, and not merely for it.

It is not merely for the fact that it is to be got by exercise; it ripens and develops by what it has; it lives in the joy of triumphant knowledge, now and forever. The heart lives by its affections. It is the noblest manifestation of affection that it lives for others; but the heart lives by affection, and wants nothing else. The mother lives by that love. That stands when everything else is gone, even when life is denied. When her boy becomes a prodigal and a wanderer, in the sacredness of her love, burning like a perpetual lamp in the tomb, she lives. Jesus Christ lived in the joy of his love, even when all the world was against him. When the spear-point pierced him, when the Roman insulted him, and the ruler of the people derided him, he lived in the greatness of that love, and rejoiced even on the cross. To live by love is the glory of the human heart; to live by truth is the glory of the human intellect; to live by Jesus Christ is the true glory and essence of religion. The great essential reward and glory of religion is here now and forever—not separated by things of time, but sustained in substantial possession.

Men say, by-and-by we shall see God, by-and-by we shall see that glorious heaven and its array of beauty and wonder. How will you see it? What has the Apostle said? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." How do you suppose this is to be interpreted?—that as

the eye does not see it now, it will by-and-by?—as the ear does not hear it now, it will by-and-by? Does it not mean that never shall eye see them, never ear hear them, and never heart conceive them; only the soul in its own conscious love will feel them now and forever? Can God ever be seen? The finite can never take in the infinite. He reveals now his face to us in the fullness and glory of nature, and more fully in Jesus Christ. God himself in his infinity we can never see; the greatness of God's everlasting truth can never be wholly told to the ear; the wonders of eternity can never be wholly revealed to the heart; but we can feel them and grasp them by taking the substance of them into our own interior life. This is the meaning of the eye not seeing, nor the ear hearing, nor the heart conceiving these things, and this is the profoundest truth in religion. We live by our faith, by our love, by our spiritual effort, by our communion. We have heaven now, God now—not by-and-by—present, instant, and constant.

And see what an argument this is for the truth of the religion of Jesus, because it shows us how we truly live. We live by Jesus Christ now, because he fills up the highest faculties of our nature; because he draws out our best affections; because he gives to us the truth of our higher being.

Let me ask you, my fellow-man, have you ever really lived? If you could only see with spiritual eyes, Broadway would sometimes look like a grave-yard, living

men like tombs and sarcophagi in which souls are buried, affections lie dead, and the noblest powers of the soul are covered with cerements of worldliness and sensuality. To live really and truly, is to live in communion with God, with Christ, with goodness, with beauty. Do we really live, and what do we live by, every day, in sunshine and in sorrow? That is a fine saying of Taylor's, when he speaks of certain who were "made of canvas that stormsails were made of." Yes, a man wants to be made of something that will stand storms as well as sunshine, that he may live in joy and in sorrow.

People sometimes say, sneering at certain forms of faith, "It is good enough to live by, but it will not do to die by." Now, if it will not do to die by, then it is not fit to live by. If you know that your faith will do to live by, you may be sure it will do to die by. That is, if you live truly; if you live only on the lower plane, it will not answer. If you live truly and faithfully, that which will do to live by will do to die by. And what is that? Have you that? have you that inward life? Have you that which will do to live by now and forever. In joy and in sorrow, in life or in death, you should have that which will do to live by. You want it; you have got to live, to suffer; change and sorrow lie before you, and death comes. Are you ready with that which will do to live by under all conditions?

It will do to live by the spirit of Jesus Christ, and thankful ought we to be for every agency by which we

are brought into communion with him. Sometimes the temptations of life will do that, for Jesus was tempted. When the great struggle of sin takes place in us, if we can only catch his spirit, then we are brought into communion with him by temptation. And sometimes sorrow will do it, for Jesus sorrowed. When we weep as he wept over the grave of Lazarus, when we struggle as he struggled in the garden, then we may be brought into communion with him. And so by the simplest things, even as simple as these elements of the broken bread and the shed wine, we may be brought into communion with him. Nothing is little or great only by the spirit which it unfolds; and if the bread stands to us as a memorial of that self-sacrificing love, if the cup presents to us the symbolism of that poured out sacrifice for the world, then it is a great thing; and if we are brought into communion with the spirit of Jesus Christ by it, let us glory and take hold of it.

And here they stand to-day, and whom do I invite? Not the good, for they will come by the gravitation of their own nature and attraction of their own sympathy to Jesus Christ; not the perfect, for there are none perfect. But I invite the tempted to come—and who is not tempted? I invite the sorrowing to come—and who has not known sorrow? I invite the guilty to come, conscious of their sin and weakness, and feeling their need of this strength. I invite you all to come to the Lord's table, not mine—not to the table of my sect,

but to the table of living, vital Christianity. I invite you to come here in this young spring season, when the forms of nature begin to yearn for the things by which they live. Oh, heart of man, with fathomless depths, look to Jesus Christ, and see what there is in him by which you live! and in the truth of that sacred consideration I invite you all to come, eating of the bread and drinking of the cup, thus eating and drinking of Jesus Christ himself, and thus living now and forever in him.

THE PATTERN IN THE MOUNT.

See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount,—Hebrews viii. 5.

THE writer of this epistle refers here to the typical or illustrative character of the Jewish religion, as compared with the dispensation of Jesus. Between these two systems existed the relations of symbol and reality, of ideal and representative, of type and antetype, as the law contained the pattern shown to Moses on Mount Sinai, when he was wrapped in the cloud, and in close communion with God, and, as such, a relation existed between the pattern which he saw there, and the tabernacle and implements of the Levitical service, which were fashioned by it. In the present discourse I propose to employ, for a practical purpose, that fact of a relation between type and antetype, between the ideal and the reality. My discourse will have two divisions. I shall consider, in the first place, the fact that all men have ideals—have some kind of spiritual conceptions—and in the second place, I shall urge the results of consistent action upon those conceptions.

In the first place, then, I say that this relation suggested in the text is one which exists in human life and experience. There is a spiritual region in and above the nature of every man, where belong the primal patterns of things; whence come the strongest inspirations, and which more or less completely casts the mold of our conduct and character. I do not know that we can lay hold of anything that more completely distinguishes man from the animal, than this faculty of fashioning something after the inward pattern or conception; not acting from instinctive routine, but from intelligent, inward, and original suggestion; not primarily molded by circumstances, but working upon circumstances with the inward force of his thought, and proceeding, withal, in the orbit of a boundless development.

Consider, for a moment, and you will see that this is the great characteristic of man—that he is the constructor of things fashioned after an inward ideal or pattern, and thus he transforms the outward world according to his mental or spiritual conceptions. Here, on one part, stands vast, unshapen matter—rock, wood, stream, fluent air; on the other part is the human agent who is to work upon this world of matter. You may say that the beaver or the bee works upon matter. The one proceeds with the utmost accuracy to build its nest, and the other to construct its dam; but there is a point at which each of them stops. They do not go a jot beyond the line of instinct; they

do nothing more wonderful, nothing different from what has been done for six thousand years. But see, out of this same world of matter, man makes houses, weapons, ships, printing presses, steam engines and telegraphs. He makes implements, and produces combinations that did not exist in nature, but that stood first as shadows on the horizon of his own thought—patterns that were shown him in the mount of intellectual and spiritual elevation. Think for a moment of the great agents and engines of our civilization, and then think what shadowy ideas they all once were. The wheels of the steamship turned as swiftly as they do now, but as silent and unsubstantial as the motions of the inventor's thought; and in the noiseless loom of his meditation were woven the sinews of the printing press, whose thunder shakes the world.

Before man, the thinker, on the mount of ideal conception, the great agents of civilization have passed in a prefiguring procession—a shadowy line of kings, bearing the symbols of a sovereignty that should, in due time, be transmitted into his hands, to become the mighty instruments of his dominion over land and sea.

But if this power which man has of working from inward conceptions is expressed in the ways in which he pours his thought into matter, it is still more apparent in the ways in which his thought, so to speak, overrides matter—as he appears not merely in inventions, but in creations. The work of art, for instance

—the great work of genius—whence comes that? Something that you do not see in nature, something that can not be interpreted as a mere combination of matter—a mere putting together of the elements of the physical world; but something that has flowed out of the ideal springs of a man's own soul, until we have the splendors of the sunset sky woven in the fibers of the canvas, and the stones of the quarry heaved up in an architectural anthem of grandeur and aspiration.

I repeat, then, it is the great peculiarity of man that he is a builder, a fashioner after an inward pattern, molding and transforming the outward world into the shape of that pattern. But that which characterizes man, generally characterizes men specifically. Each individual man is endeavoring to realize some ideal, is trying to make some shadowy conception substantial. Perhaps he is not conscious of this—very likely he is not. He may not see any vivid connection between the type that is in his mind and his daily conduct; but if you will reflect for a moment, you will see that the very condition of our endeavor is desire, which is something that exists now only as a mental conception. Even the basest, the grossest man, is incited in this manner. He has his pattern, gross and vile as it may be, which he is trying to realize. The tides of billowy life that heave through a hundred streets, are moved by unseen ideal attractions.

But the main conclusion to which I would lead your

thought is this: that almost every man has conceptions higher and better than he realizes, or than he even endeavors to make real. The ideal of wealth, of pleasure, of splendid fame that he seeks, is often a pattern that is shown to him, and he tries to fashion his circumstances to it. And here what a power there is—what a secret spring—to move man! What would man do without the ideal motive before him to lead him on? If you look at men in the street, what are they, after all, but as mere figures, moved by unseen power hither and thither? It is only by seeing the ideal from which they act, that you get at the spring which moves them. But I say in the minds of most men, in those especially brought up under the influence of Christian culture, there is a higher and better ideal than these ordinary worldly ones; nay, in the mind of every man I believe there is such an ideal. To come at once to the point, almost every man—yes, I will say every man—has some ideal of religion, of moral excellence, of spiritual attainment. Before every man there hovers a high conception—or one more or less high—certainly above the level of his present conduct—of virtue, of moral action, of duty, of righteousness, of truth; and the more he looks at that, the more vivid it becomes to him. Although he may, at the same time, not move a jot or a hair toward it, nor even endeavor, for a single instant, to come up to it, yet it stands before him, and he sees it clear and bright, kindling upon his thought, and ready

to move his heart. And you see this fact revealed in this remarkable manner by every man. If he does ever so bad an act, he tries to justify it in some way—tries to reconcile it to some ideal of virtue. There is no man so hardened that he does not have an apology for the wrong he does, however atrocious it may be. No matter if it be something that violates all the sanctities of society, that jars upon every man's heart; he endeavors to show that there was a good motive at the bottom of it, and it was not done from a motive utterly evil and corrupt. So that from his own showing, his own confession, there is an ideal standard in his mind higher than that from which he has acted. It is a great thing, this attempt of man to justify his conduct, for it is a universal tribute to a law above the soul of man, guiding his conscience; it is a proclamation everywhere, that human nature is such that it is not limited and confined by mere sensual, material ideals, but that it acknowledges and sees a higher spiritual plane.

There are times, then, I say, when even the worst man is caught up into a mount of higher conception, and has a pattern better than his own life set before him; but he does not always see that pattern, or, if he does, he does not diligently work after it. What better advice, then, what better exhortation could be given to any man than just this? Work out your highest conceptions—the noblest standard of truth and duty that comes to you. It may not be the highest

possible, nor the highest conceivable by other men, but that which seems to you the highest possible or conceivable, work up to, and live up to, and endeavor to make it the rule. Why, of the most debased, most hardened, surely we can say, they have some better thought than what appears in their present life. Surely, oh, prodigal, among the husks and swine, you are not entirely transformed and assimilated to the things among which you live; you are not yourself all husk and swine. Oh, vile, polluted man! there is something better in your thought than that which appears in your life—something nobler on the horizon of your soul than that which you have symbolized and represented in your action.

And so especially it is in regard to the matter of faith about which many are much troubled and perplexed. They say they can not believe that the Bible is divinely inspired; they are not fully convinced about the immortality of the soul, and they even sometimes incline to doubt the existence of a God. What then are you to do, my fellow-men? To throw aside all faith and live outside of its circle, merely as an animal, in a coarse, material existence? No—no; some shred of faith you have. Every man has some. Some conceptions of spiritual things dawn upon every mind; live up to the faith you have. Have you a faith that it is good to do good? Live up to that. Have you faith that charity is a blessed thing? Live up to that. Work out to the extreme limit of your concep-

tion here, and just so sure as you do it, the wider will your circle open before you. That is the best way to get over intellectual and spiritual difficulties; take the solid ground on which you stand, and make that a platform of action. Do not, because you can not see all things, act in nothing. If you can not believe in the truths that come to you in Christ Jesus, take what truth you can believe. If you do not believe the Bible, I am sorry for you. I do not see why you do not believe it, with its grand application to your spiritual necessity, its trumpet appeals, its warning and instruction, its glorious character of Jesus Christ as the ideal; but if you do not believe it, work up that which you do believe. There is something, I repeat, higher and better, hovering over every life, and as to that, I apply the words of the text, "Make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

In the next place, let us proceed to see what will result if a man actually attempts thus to work up to his highest and best spiritual conceptions. In the first place, I think he will acquire some comprehension of the worth and certainty of spiritual being, and of the reality of his own soul. Let a man think, when he endeavors to carry out the best conception of duty, how much that is all-controlling and supreme in his life, let him think that the highest claim in his life is from within; let him think how mind will after all control and master the body. For, as I said in the commencement, in the coarsest endeavor, in the basest action of

a man's life, it is his inward desire that moves him. It is not the mere object itself; there must exist in him a desire, a yearning for that object, or he makes no endeavor to attain it. Let him think, then, how the springs of his action are spiritual, are inward, existing in the desires of his soul. And allow me to ask, What is this spiritual or conscious power within him? Is it possible that matter is everything? Is it possible that man, controlled by this inward desire, moving forward to some ideal, is nothing more than the block, the stone, the metal upon which he works? Is it possible that man, who has been led forward from age to age, through a splendid succession of achievements, until he has transformed this material world, and made it an instrument of power, strung the lightning and made it work for him, rode on wheels of thunder with banners of flame—is it possible that man, working upward from this ideal, is simply a clod upon the earth? The moment you think of this power to control and master material things, you fall back upon the consciousness that you have a soul, and that there is more evidence than you have supposed of its existence. In fact, there is more proof of a soul than of a body. When a man asks me what proof I have of a soul, I reply by asking him, What proof have you of a body? You have more logical difficulty to prove an outward world than a soul. Spiritual consciousness, mounting aspiration, ideal influences have controlled you all through life.

But more than this; not only will a man, as he

begins to work from his best spiritual conceptions upward, begin to comprehend the worth of spiritual things and of the soul, but he will begin to acquire right standards of action. I hardly need say that in the calculations of men, very generally they do not start from the ground of the soul. If you look at a great many of the social fallacies of our time, at a great many of the social faults and errors of men in business, in politics, and in life generally, you will find that the fallacy or error consists in the fact that they do not start from the ground of the soul as a standard, but from outward things. They estimate all outward things by their bulk or glitter. It is strange to see how, in the midst of civilization, we are guilty of the grossest Fetish worship, like the African or rude barbarian. Instead of worshipping the true spiritual ideal, we bow down before the gross idols of fashion, wealth, and power; so that a man is carried along in the great maelstrom, with his individual convictions and consciousness subservient to the opinions of the mass. One thing we greatly need, and that is, more individuality. Man needs to fall back into his own personal consciousness, to rely upon his own spiritual convictions, instead of being taken off his feet and carried into the crowd, and made to worship external and material things. Much of our civilization that we glorify is nothing more than a worship of matter, rather than an estimate from the highest ground—from a spiritual standard.

The great fault of man's reasoning is not in the process, but in the premises. We say of a man, that he can not reason well because he is wrong in his process. That is not the fault; his mistake consists in his not starting well—in his premises, rather than his process. The knave reasons as well as the saint, but he does not start from the same premises. The insane man often reasons most acutely, most wonderfully. If you get into the stream of his logic, he trips you up. So sharp, so subtile is he, and so ready to meet your objections, that you have to go back to the false premises and conceptions in the chink and crannies of his brain, which weaken it, and make it morbid. Starting from these he makes the mistake. The sane man differs from the insane man, not in the process, but in the premises. And so it is with regard to the reasoning of men generally. They start from false premises, and reasoning from them, at last come to the conclusion that anything they do is right. If they once can make themselves believe that it is right to uphold a certain traffic, then it is easy to come to the conclusion that anything by which they sustain it is right. If they believe they have a right to consult expediency, then it is but another step to believe in the right to pick a national pocket just as much as a private pocket—to steal an island as much as to commit a trespass upon private property. Start with wrong premises, and all manner of conclusions will follow.

So it is sometimes with men in trade—sometimes,

not always. They keep on studying a set of valuable results, which, consciously or unconsciously, they adopt as part of their creed. They start not from the ground of the ten commandments, but of cotton bales and sugar hogsheads—of quick returns and large profits. They do not care much about any grand plan of life, unless there are plenty of coupons at the margin.

This, then, is the great fault with men; they start with the premises of worldly gain and worldly good. I do not say that a man always sits down and says that that is his end; but that is really or virtually his end.

There is one evil in our society that may come from extensive reading of the sayings and doings of very good men. We have had, during the past week, an eloquent discourse upon the life of Franklin. Now Franklin was a man who did not live by mere expediency, especially during the latter part of his life. He did not care for his own sordid interest in the sacrifices he made in the Revolution. But a good many have taken his maxims of worldly prudence and made them their Bible, almost; and by a too rigid adherence to them they have run into a system of mere worldly expediency—into an idea that nothing that thwarts gain, hinders profit, damages worldly good, is to stand in their way; and, with that premise, all kinds of conclusions, all kinds of results may come.

And so it is in politics. Men start, not from the platform of ideal and spiritual realities, but from party. It is the Buffalo or the Baltimore platform, and not

that of Mount Sinai or the Mount of Olives. And so, in countless instances in life, men rear up from false premises, build up from the outside, stretch out horizontally, not vertically. They are not architects of the ideal within; they do not start from the ground of the soul. Let a man take up the subject of immortality—of the spirit of man enshrined in time, and working through sense, as destined to live beyond the stars, when banks and warehouses, cities and continents, shall have melted with fervent heat, and crumbled to ashes; when this world shall be dashed from its orbit as a speck of dust from a flying wheel—let him take the grand calculus of the immortality of the soul, and start with that, and then worldly good and gain will take their proper attitude, temporary expediency will sink down, and right will assert its proper place; then he will have a true standard by which to estimate all things.

In the next place, if a man really endeavors to work according to his highest and best inward conception, he will come to perceive the need of Christ and the worth of Christianity. For let any man, as I have suggested, work from a spiritual conception, however low, however narrow, and he will be sure to arrive at a conception a little higher and broader, and from that to one still more high, and so on. This is a law everywhere. The moment a man gets a taste of knowledge, if there is any love of it in him, he wants more, and the more he knows, the more he wishes to know. He

feels his ignorance, and his aspirations are higher. That is what distinguishes the scholar from a man who gets what is popularly termed an education. A man goes to school five or six years, and then he is all varnished and polished, ready to be put into a shop; but the scholar never knows enough; he is always aspiring for something more. New facts burst upon him; that which he has attained is but a key to the boundless treasure of truth.

So in regard to art. Let a man for the first time look at paintings, and he hardly knows a good one from a poor one. He has no standard of discrimination. But when he becomes familiar with works of art, he acquires a taste by which he can judge of the merits of any work that is presented to him.

And so it is in music. It is by experience practically put forth in one degree, that we gain the power to work in a higher degree.

And so in regard to spiritual action. As soon as a man works up to his best and highest ideal, just so soon a new ideal will burst upon him. Working from his best and highest, he gains a better and a higher still, until at length he will come to feel that spiritual aspirations are boundless. And when, from the yearnings of his educated soul, he wants a perfect ideal, he will ask, Where is the excellence that will answer my highest ideal? where is that which will begin to fill up this boundless thirst of the soul, which has only been increased by drinking from narrow cisterns?

And Jesus Christ comes out upon the horizon of history, and stands before him in the Gospel, and answers that inquiry. He says virtually to man, "I am the ideal for which you aspire; in me behold a perfect reflection of that which you now must seek; in me behold that which continually fills up your yearning want, and makes that want the deeper, that it may fill it with more." Here stands man on one side, with a sense of imperfection and sin, asking, What is there that will help me in, what is there that will deliver me from the power of sin? No mere man, no mere teacher, like Plato or Seneca, can do it. Man needs some spirit of divine goodness to enter into him, to cure him of his sin, and Jesus Christ embodies that divine spirit. He comes before man to assure him of mercy, with the encouragement that the vilest sin may be cast off, and that man may throw himself upon the divine mercy which he represents, and be lightened of his load.

And here, on the other hand, are limitless wants and desires; and how does Jesus Christ gratify them? By exhibiting a perfect Father; by showing an ideal to us that we never can compass, but can always aspire to. That is the only thing that can answer the aspirations of man's nature—a perfect excellence that man can never reach, but toward which he can ever be moving.

"Oh," says the weary worker who drops his chisel before the marble, "I can imitate the natural object, but it does not answer my ideal; I want to achieve

something better and nobler, and I can do it." "Oh," says the poet, "I can sing a still sweeter song." "Oh," says the philosopher, "there are more boundless depths of thought down which I can drop the plummet of my searching intellect." There must be something beyond man in this world. Even on attaining to his highest possibilities, he is like a bird beating against his cage. There is something beyond. Oh, deathless soul, like a sea-shell, moaning for the bosom of the ocean to which you belong! Tell me not of a limitation, says the weary, broken heart, over the grave of its hopes. Tell me not that this world is all, says the bereaved mother. Tell me not that death is an eternal sleep, says feeble and broken humanity. And feeling this great need of the soul, we cling to the cross and to faith in immortality.

I repeat, commencing with our lowest spiritual ideal, and working upward, we reach that state of thought, that aspiration, that desire which Christ alone can satisfy, and which he does satisfy. And a great proof of Christianity is this: that we work upward from our best spiritual conceptions, and come to this great spiritual antetype at last. The man who lives most truly according to his spiritual wants and capacities, who unfolds most sincerely and constantly his best ideal, comes to the conclusion that Christ and Christianity are the greatest blessings that God has given to the world; that they alone can satisfy, and that they alone will answer that ideal.

Many at the present day are afraid of science and philosophy. The other day there came out in one of our most scientific journals a statement of some recent discoveries in Egypt, in which one important fact was left out, namely, that from the most accurate computations that could be made, it is supposed that men existed in Egypt eleven thousand years ago. This discovery was based upon the fact of works of pottery being found at a considerable depth below the surface of the earth, the superstratum having been deposited only at the rate of three and a half inches in a century. That was thought to damage revelation. Damage revelation! You might just as well suppose that a man could damage the throne of the Almighty, as to damage the essential truth of revelation. What difference does it make whether this world is six thousand or six million years old, to the wounded spirit that feels the balm of Christ's comfort? to the tempest-tossed soul that Christ has lifted up? to the spiritual experience that sees in God its highest ideal, and mounts upward continually? There is no more connection between the two things than there is between duty and a stone, between goodness and a tree, between a thing utterly spiritual and utterly material. Science does its work—its great and noble work—on one plane of action, and revelation on another.

What is the object of revelation? It is to lead man to God; to show him the Father; to bring his spirit into conscious communion through Jesus Christ; to

deliver him from his sins, and comfort him in his sorrow. Oh, geologist, chip away with your hammer to the end of time; you can not strike away one grain of the truth in Jesus Christ, as it comes to my soul. Oh, ethnologist, trace back the history of man as far as you can; you can not seal up this spiritual want of mine, which Christ satisfies. Each thing to its proper domain: science to interpret material things, to unlock the bonds of nature; Christianity to comfort the soul, and lift it up. But if there does come a collision between the two—which I conceive impossible—of what have you the strongest evidence: that the world is six millions of years old, or that Jesus Christ comforts you in sorrow, lifts you up when you are bowed down, and brings you to an ideal that answers your wants and aspirations? The soul's evidence is the highest, and must be heard. Let Newton and Le Verrier unfold the starry heavens, and let us hear the music of the spheres, but at the same time the soul stands up and says, "I, too, am a reality; I know that I have a Father, for I have felt him; I know that I have a Saviour, for he has lifted me up, and blessed me. Science is doubtless true; but if it is not, I know that I am, for I know that I feel. I strive, therefore, to work after a pattern that is older than time and sense—a spiritual ideal that has been shown me in the mount of spiritual elevation and faith."

And, lastly, let me say this: that if any man endeavors to realize his highest—his best spiritual con-

ceptions—he will be successful only by earnest effort. I have shown that, working upward from our best spiritual realities, we will come to something better and higher—we will come to a conviction of spiritual realities, and of the essential truth of Christ Jesus. Now, in order to do this, we must work earnestly, and put forth earnest effort. There are no great interests achieved, or works done, in this world, except by earnestness. Why should not a man be as enthusiastic in regard to religion, and the great interests of the soul, as in regard to worldly affairs? There is a great difference between enthusiasm and fanaticism. They are the antipodes of each other. There never was a man who did a great thing in the world without enthusiasm. No man ever made a fortune without it. Was there ever an artist who was not enthusiastic in his art? So in regard to matters of religion—of fulfilling the spiritual ideal—we must be enthusiastic. If a man is going really to live up to his best conceptions of God, truth, and duty, according to the pattern shown him in the mount, everything else must stand subservient to that, and he must be enthusiastic about it. How gloriously this enthusiasm breaks out in other things—in patriotism, for instance, as was exemplified in the maid of Saragossa, as she stood up by the gun, bespattered with blood; in John Hancock, who, when the council met in Boston, in the stormy days of the Revolution, and talked of letting the British into the city, though he owned probably more

property that any other man in Boston, said, "Burn Boston, and make John Hancock a beggar, if the public good requires it." We like to hear such things; but why don't men say, "Burn the richest treasure I have got, if it corrupts my soul. Burn down the pinnacles of my pride—my wordly interest—if they stand in the way of my attainment and fulfillment of the great pattern which has been shown me in the mount?"

We do not like fanaticism in anything; but if we must have it at all, let us have the fanaticism of religion rather than that of worldliness. For the most fanatical man of the two is he that buries his soul up in bullion, grovels in the earth, and lives like a barnacle on this planet, without recognizing anything higher or better. I would rather see a fanatic in religion than in worldliness. That old fanatic, Simeon, who founded a sect called "Pillar Saints," who stood ten years on the top of a pillar in sun and storm, drenched and dried, weather-beaten and baked, who lived and died there, was at least so much nearer heaven than the fanatic who was groping below.

But there is no need of fanaticism in order to fulfill the noblest ideal. It is not by going out of our relations, but by diligent action in our relations to business, truth, and social action, everywhere, no matter where it may be, if it is lawful, that you can fulfill the ideal of spiritual good that comes to you in Jesus Christ. Only be in earnest—be enthusiastic about it.

Oh, my friend, you have, as I remarked in the commencement, some ideal higher than that which you act upon; you are lifted up to something that is above the common plane of your life. What is the significance of material things? It is in the impression they leave upon the mind—the elements they transfer to our consciousness. Therefore, if on standing on a mountain I get an idea of something lofty and glorious, the impression is maintained. Suppose, now, that I am lifted up on the mount of prayer or meditation, and I get an idea of something elevated and glorious, am I not just as much on the mountain, to all intents and purposes, as on the Mount of Olives or Sinai? Oh, man, there are some duties hovering before you which you know you have not fulfilled—some great claim you have not completely answered. It may be you have recognized the ideal in Christ Jesus, and feel that that is what you should aspire after with earnest effort. I repeat, then, what is the thing that stands higher to you than the present plane of your life? Aspire to it. There is no more earnest voice than that which comes to you to-day, speaking of that which is higher than that which you now do—nobler than that which you have cherished, and saying to you, “Go forth; make all things after the pattern shown to thee in the mount.”

FAITH AND ITS ASPIRATIONS.

From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.—Psalm lxi. 2.

THIS is the language of an earnest spirit, conscious of need, and by a strong figure of speech expressing its conviction of the existence of a help outside, and greater than itself. How wonderfully fresh and applicable the Book of Psalms is! What a reservoir of human experience! what a perpetual spring-tide of human sympathies! It has some form of speech for every devout need of the soul. It is a great organ of religious utterance, pealing forth in that grand old Hebrew age, from every valve and stop of emotion that the human spirit has felt, or will feel, until time shall be no more. The cry of anguish, the burst of praise, the wail of penitence, the prayer of need, the expression of trust, the sacred admiration that sweeps the starry heavens, the contrite introspection concentrated upon the sin-sick soul—all these find language there. The strings of David's harp are the chords of the universal heart. Doubtless, my friends, you and I, as well as thousands besides, have seen the

time when the words of the text were just the words we wanted to use; when, conscious of weakness, of need, of the pressure of temptation, of sorrow, of adverse forces, in darkness, in some great storm of calamity beating upon us, or some heat of this world's glare too strong for us, we could have cried from the bottom of the heart, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

But I wish especially to say of the language of the text just now, that it is peculiarly the expression of religion. It springs out of religious emotions, and justifies religious conceptions. It gives us the idea that there is such a thing as religion apart from anything like enlightened intelligence, or mere moral punctiliousness or correctness of conduct. There is such an element as religion, and the language of the text is peculiarly the language of that element. In other words, I take the text as the basis of a few remarks designed to show the specialty and necessity of religion, apart from anything else that, in our minds, we may associate with it.

To illustrate what I mean more distinctly, I remark, in the first place, that this is the expression of faith, as distinguished from science, and it justifies that faith. The present age is not, I think, to be characterized above all others as an age of intellect, as some might suppose. At least it is not peculiarly the age of great intellects. If anything, I should say it was otherwise. In all ages of the world there have been men equal, if

not superior in caliber to any of the present time—equal, if not superior in depth, real power, and substance of intellect. It is rather an age of diffused knowledge; an age in which there are more cultivated intellects than ever before; and this march of intellect of which we hear so much spoken, consists, I suppose, in bringing the rear ranks of humanity into the front, rather than in displaying any great generalship of intellect. Nor is it an age of fresh, vigorous, original intellect peculiarly; because in our time, with all this diffused knowledge, there also is a diffused imitation; there is a conformity of thought very prevalent among men. Men think very much alike—in platoons, in sects, in parties. It is not a time when there is great, fresh, original thinking, such as there was in the days of the Reformation, and such as there has been in other times when great religious or political questions have pressed upon every heart. In such times, even men with small intellectual capacity have been kindled and fired with zeal, and become powerful; for it is a characteristic of human nature, that sometimes a man of much less substance of intellect than another is more powerful, because he is more in earnest. There have been times of more earnest thought than at the present, and I repeat that I should not characterize our times as an age of intellect, but rather as an age of science. It is an age of vast knowledge, so far as the material world is concerned. It is an age of wonderful control over the forces and facts of nature.

By this knowledge, certainly, man has great power, as he has by all intellectual acquisition. Intellectual strength is a wondrous faculty. In yonder closet there sits a pale thinker, in body puny almost as an infant, shrinking from the cold, and withering under the heat like a sensitive plant. And yet upon some occasion that man will stand up, and his words will run like an electric shock through the hearts of thousands, and they will be swayed by the sheer force of his mind like the leaves of the summer forest. He sets his pen to the vindication of some truth, and his documents flying abroad, alarm councils, change faiths, and alter polities.

Intellectual power is a wonderful attribute of man. I stand looking at an eclipse of the sun or of the moon. There are two things that always especially excite my admiration. First, there is the regularity of those great laws by which the heavenly bodies move in their appointed path, by which every planet comes to its proper place in due time. In the second place, there is the wonderful accuracy of science, which has so detected those laws that it can prophesy their fulfillment from age to age, and can foretell the precise instant, centuries ahead, when the moon's edge shall touch and sail across the disc of the sun. But yet, with all this power and glory of science, it can not do everything for man that he needs. It does not correspond to his entire nature; it does not represent all the elements that are in him. Man feels that unless there is something else to be ministered to him than

mere truth which comes in a scientific form, he is helpless and needy, and is justified in looking around him for something more ; because there is no faculty of our nature that has not, or ought not to have, its needed supply. We know it is so with the bodily system, with the whole material organism with which we are connected. The lungs are fitted for air, the eyes for light, and all outward adjustments appear in due order, adapted to the cravings and needs of the bodily organism. The intellect has scientific truth that excites it, and leads it to explore, and achieve its great victories. So there are exquisite affections in man that are without supply, unless there is some other resource than that which comes through the medium of science. Now man can not live and die, can not meet all the occasions, and bear up among all the vicissitudes of life, merely by science, merely by what the understanding grasps, and the intellect systematizes and makes plain. It is possible you may find a few rare instances of men who can make out what is called a scientific religion, and live by it ; having a cause for every effect, and a law for every crisis ; finding the source of their own suffering at the end of the scalpel, and counting up their beating pulses by the tick of the watch. But there are few people who can stand on the level of the mere facts of nature and say it is enough to know that the earth turns on its axis, and that all things move in order.

My friends, we want something higher than all this

—something that is not merely on the level of our intellectual comprehension. We want something beside these forces of nature. They have no particular sympathy with us. They are relentless, silent, stern. They move on in a terrible but splendid order. We crave something akin to ourselves—something near to our own souls, as nature is not—something that is higher than ourselves, to lift us up. It must be above the facts that prevail around us.

If you look at this point, if you take a survey of the needs and conditions of men, you will find that what science supplies is not sufficient. With the achievements of science, we pile up splendid trophies about us; but still I am inclined to think that, after all, they give to our age a kind of hard, materialistic aspect. We lack something which other ages have had; for human history is strangely like human development. There is such a thing as tracing out analogy too far; but just as you find individuals eminent in one kind of excellence and lacking in another, so you will find ages prominent in one thing and deficient in another; and just as you find individuals bringing their contributions to human knowledge, so you will find ages, as it were, bringing their contributions to the millennial period. So we turn with a kind of yearning and longing back to the age of faith, as distinguished from our age of science; and while we see a great deal of superstition, while we recognize much mental slavery, and many things that we would not

transport into our own time, we discover some elements in it that we like—something in the unworldly heart that built the grand cathedrals, and painted the glorious pictures of the past—something in the wide-spread reverence—something in the saintly forms of love and devotion, which we feel is needed to temper our too adamant intellect, our too materialistic atmosphere. Therefore, we say, what comes through science does not make up the complement and perfection of human nature. We need an element of faith—that kind of faith with which this grand old Psalm was written. The soul wants something more than what the mere intellect gives; something that can reach the depths of its affections, and strengthen it in its moral weakness.

Positive knowledge, after all, what a little way it goes in the formation of life and character—what a little way in supplying the deeper wants of the heart! You know a fact—you know ten thousand facts; what then? Do you realize the essence of a single fact? Do you bring a practical account of that fact to bear upon your heart and life? Why, some of the greatest knowers in the world have sat amid it all as unmoved and untouched by the grand truths which appeal to them, as though they were marble. Laplace sees the whole solar system unraveled before him, traces the minutest fiber, follows out the grandest deductions, and yet finds no God in the universe at all. The anatomist opens the human system, and reads that wondrous handwriting in the flesh, and yet sees no

religion there. His intellect is blunted to that. It is one thing to see a fact intellectually, and another to get at the essence of that fact. And how do we get at the essence of any truth except by faith—by faith in the invisible veiled in the visible? God is declared, not by open revelation, but by the things he has made; and unless man has faculties by which he comprehends that declaration, it is all cold, dead atheistic matter to him, after all. The essence of the fact, the spirit that moves within the wheels—how are we to apprehend these? How do you apprehend any great spiritual fact about you—such, for instance, as the love of your father or mother, or those dearest to you? Not by what you can see, not by any outward form or lineament, but by what you believe of the inward spirit and principle. And so in the universe at large, unless something more than the mere scientific intellect which grasps the fact is present; unless there is faith to apprehend and take hold of the spiritual reality, we get nothing but the dead, atheistic form of things.

And when positive knowledge fails, we want this trust in something higher. When the sky is obscured, the chart torn, the compass lost, man raises to his eye the glass of faith, and sees through the mist the thread of love quivering down from the eternal orb and drawing him on. We need something higher than science. We need that faith which lifts us up to a close realizing sense of communion with God who is behind the facts of nature.

But I observe, in the second place, that the language of the text is the language of religion as distinguished from morality. We have seen that it is the language of religion as distinguished from science; I say it is the language of religion as distinguished from morality. Now every good man—every man that is trying to accomplish a true ideal of life—finds two truths, two sentiments, two tendencies, working in his mind and his heart, and he can not get rid of them, let him do what he may. There is no amount of logic can drive them out. There on the one hand is the sovereignty of God, the supreme control, the foreordination of God Almighty; that is one truth that no reasoning man can push out of his mind. Supposing that God is perfect in all his attributes; he must have foreknown and foreordained all things, and he must control in the grand result. You can not put your logic into any shape by which you can get rid of that conclusion, if you admit the infinity of God. But, on the other hand, there speaks to us something that I may with all reverence say is nearer to us even than this fact—our own consciousness. There is a voice within us which assures us that we are free to act in a certain direction, and that we have a terrible responsibility given to us of choosing between right and wrong, between good and evil. We are assured we have it, because we feel a sense of blame always following our wrong-doing. Wherever you follow man, no matter what may be his physical form, his religion, his creed,

his degree of intellectual elevation, if he is sound-minded you find in him a sense of blame. All over the world there is found this accusation of a moral law within him, that is predicated on and justified only by the conviction that he could have done right when he did wrong. Therefore, just as sure as the sovereignty of God on the one hand rests on our reason, so on the other hand does our sense of moral freedom rest on our consciousness. These are two facts that every earnest man meets in the great problem of his moral and spiritual life.

Now, out of the first of these—the fact of God's sovereignty—grows the sentiment of dependence. That is peculiarly a religious sentiment. And out of the other fact—the consciousness of moral freedom—grows the sentiment of moral responsibility; a feeling that we have some obligation laid upon us—something that we ought to do—something that we are not to shift upon the shoulders of another, but that we ourselves must perform. Now I say that the tendency of the one fact is to excite a disposition especially religious, and of the other especially moral. The grand religious emotions grow out of the doctrine of God's sovereignty. You see them piled up mountain high in the old Hebrew Bible, as expressed in the sentiment that God rules all things according to the counsel of his own will; does what he will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; says to the waves of the sea, Thus far shalt thou come,

and no farther. This is the grand fact that the Hebrew Testament embodies—a sense of God's overruling sovereignty.

And it is a remarkable fact—you may explain it as you can—that the most energetic, the most powerful, the most active men have been those who have believed in the sovereignty of God. One would naturally infer that if a man believes that God overrules and ordains all things, he would be disposed to sit down in a kind of blank fatalism, just as the Orientals have done, and have no strength to move—that it would cool his native ardor. But the most energetic men have been those who have thrown themselves back on a sense of the sovereignty of God. Cromwell's Ironsides, who were never defeated, every man of them, I suppose, believed in the old Calvinistic doctrine of election and foreordination. Now, I dislike Calvinism in its essence, perhaps, as much as anybody, but I must give it this tribute: that this element of a consistent, firm faith in God's divine sovereignty has been one of its prominent powers, and in some respects one of its peculiar wonders. It is really an abnegation of the individual and a substitution of the sense of God working through the individual. Man himself is nothing in that system but the instrument of God Almighty. Man is a poor earthly vessel, but he may have in him God's omnipotent power; and what a power that is! Though the machine be of flesh and blood, it is moved by the omnipotence of God. We utter God's truth, we do his

will—that is the sense in which the Cromwellian Ironsides charged, and the Puritans struck the rocky strand of New England. It was a sense that they were the vehicles through which the divine sovereignty flowed. It may go too far and make a man think too little of himself—for it is possible to think too little of one's self as well as too much—but, at the same time, if we are instruments of divine sovereignty, and that becomes a prominent fact before us, it is a mighty power.

On the other hand, diligent effort—moral works rather than great reformatory or revolutionary achievements—come out of the sense of man's freedom. It is the tendency of modern times to dwell somewhat exclusively on man's responsibility—on what man has to do. That is the track in which much of our modern thought runs, especially of what we call the liberal character. It has a great deal to say of moral obligation. It seeks to establish the notion that prayer is not everything, and that man must work with his prayer. It has been the mainspring of philanthropy. Men, feeling a deep sense of moral obligation to their fellow-men, have made strenuous efforts for humanity—not of a revolutionary character, such as have marked the great eras of history, but in the form of moral movements. Men have said, "I ought to do this; I ought to make this sacrifice for my fellow-men," and out of this sense of personal responsibility have arisen many of those glorious moral reforms.

Now everybody sees that these two things—the

sense of dependence and of responsibility—ought to unite. Logically we can not find the hinge where they come together, but practically we can. I do not know that any man who resolves to live truly, finds any trouble with either of these facts—that the sovereignty of God disturbs his diligence in the performance of his duty, or that his sense of personal responsibility takes away his feeling of dependence on God. But we may go to the extreme, and depend upon human effort entirely; we may feel that man must do something for himself, and that when he fails, all is over. You will hear sometimes a tone of despondency in this class of people. Men after acting as though there was not a God working behind everything, and after experiencing a transient defeat in a righteous cause in consequence of some temporary balk, will exclaim, “It is no use; sin is too much for us—wickedness is too great.” Too much—too great for what? For your puny arm; but is it too much or too great, think you, for the Lord who sits in the heavens, and who does his will among the inhabitants of the earth? We are a hasty people, growing more and more so, and we think the millennium should be organized in our own day—that it should be inaugurated and put in perfect working order in about ten years, forgetting that, with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; unmindful of the fact that he works serenely—never resting—but pouring his infinite will through all vehicles and receptacles, through all minds

and all hearts—sure in the end to bring about the great result.

Oh, sublime, glorious faith for faltering, disappointed man to fall back upon—that Almighty God sits at the helm of the universe, and steers the mighty ship through all ages; that his will is sure to be done; that the ordinance that has gone from his mouth will not be balked; that before the brightness of his glory all darkness will pass away; that before the infinitude of his love and goodness all evil will come to an end, and in due time he will regulate the earth to his purpose, and gather together in one all things in Christ Jesus. Do we not sometimes, in our excessive sense of moral duty, forget this grand truth which we need—that there is a rock that is higher than we; that there is an infinite, a supreme, to which we must be lifted up? Ah, there is something worse even than that. There is a general irreverence growing out of it in our times. Men think they must do everything, until by-and-by they come to think they are everything. They come to consider themselves as gods. They speak as though they unfolded history, founded colonies, built up empires, wrought revolutions. Little man thinks he is ruler of the earth, and that all the grand changes in the drama of history are wrought by himself, and he struts about as if there were no God—no ruler above him.

We must hold on to everything that is good in the sense of personal responsibility, and everything that

inspires or generates human philanthropic effort; but we must come back to the grand old religious trust—to that rock on which we can lean, and from which we must start in every grand effort. When we undertake to embark in a great work, it will not do to depend upon ourselves alone; we must feel that we are placed at our post but for a day, and that there is One who steers the ship, who guides the event, and will bring it out all right, though we may not behold it in our day or generation. Our duty is to be diligent at our post, but to trust to One who is over and above us, and who will accomplish his purpose in his own good time.

So I come to observe, finally, that there are occasions in life when religion demonstrates itself to be a special need and prompting of the soul; when not only is this text found to be the language of religion, above all science and all mere morality, but above all mere logical arguments, above all debates, above all controversy; when there breaks out a demonstration of the truths of religion in just such language and experience as that which is contained in the words of the text—"When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I." You never can upset religion. It is one of the grand, prominent faculties of human nature; that is demonstrated. It is one of the most foolish acts of folly in the world to talk of religion as some superstition that is going to pass away in time, and of a period that will arrive when all men shall depend merely on their brains for

what human nature wants; and when all religion will be looked upon just as strangely, and with as just as much ridicule, as we now look back upon the most groveling superstitions of the world. Some men think that the grand spiritual laws which Christ laid down, and the noble truths he uttered, of love to God and man, and all that constitutes the domain of religious faith will pass away like a cloud, and that we shall stand in the clear sunlight of positive knowledge. I can tell you, my friends, that man's everlasting, deep experience contradicts all that; for there are times and occasions when out of something that is more profound and more radical than reason or intelligence, breaks forth the deep, earnest prayer, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I!"

Let a man get what he can with the intellect. It is a good thing; it gives us a point of observation. I have no sympathy with those that sneer at intellectual religion. There is a class of men who think that faith is nothing but wishy-washy nonsense, and yet hold to it for all that. Such is the abjectness of some men, that just in proportion as a thing puzzles, tangles, and humiliates reason, in that proportion do they believe in it. Does God Almighty ask you to ignore consciousness—to sacrifice reason? Give me an intellectual religion which, so far as my human reason can go, shines forth clear as sunlight. It is time we had more of it; there is too much of religion that is tradition, too much of it that is opposed to intelligence.

Let us get all we can by the intellect, and hold on to it, for it will help us much in the religious life.

There is great good in moral habits, if by them a man can in any way bind himself to rectitude. I have no great faith in the man who simply has a nest of habits without any guiding, settled principle; but if he can build around him an inclosure of moral habits it will do him good. They may serve the same purpose as a go-cart for a little child to learn to walk by, supporting him while he is weak, until he is able to walk alone. There is great good in moral habits; but, after all, when you want to look for the strength of a man, for that which will enable him to bear and to achieve, you must look to the heart; you must look to that for the spring of effort and power. Religion addresses the heart; Christianity addresses the heart; all vital truth of God strikes at the heart, as the source of regeneration and noble action—not at the intellect—not at the moral habits. Why? Because without the heart the mere gifts of intellectual light, of moral character, are not enough. How often you see men with the clearest intellects who are the most abject cowards in the world! How common is the spectacle of a man gifted with brilliant genius, capable of the most profound investigations, and endowed with rare acquirements, who, after all, is a moral coward, afraid to put forth his convictions, lest perchance he shall tread on the toes of some one he does not wish to offend! What such a man lacks is heart. On the other hand, you see

men of good moral purposes who are weak simply because they have no strong, clear principles. They are sometimes touched through their weakness by temptation, and thus fall. I suppose some of the worst sins in the world are committed, not so much from bad motives, as from weakness; men lack moral strength. A great many sins you can trace to weakness of heart without any deliberately bad motive. We want a strong heart, if we would have a strong man and a true life.

But, after all, is the heart strong in itself? I am inclined to think that the heart of man always remains a kind of infant in this world. It is the tenderest, softest place, and ought to be; it is a glorious thing that it is. Sometimes it puts on a little bravery, just as a child braces itself up with a mock courage; but it is very fitful and very timid, and when you get at the core of it, it is the most tender thing in the world. The roughest, strongest man has got his fears; he shrinks just as he did when a child; and, if he is a true man, he is glad to come and lean his head on the bosom of God, as he was wont, when a child, to nestle in the lap of his mother. You find under rough and hard exteriors soft, generous, kindly feelings.

But the true courage that men have does not come out of the heart; that is what I want to urge. I do not mean the courage that blusters—the mere bravado that bullies all the world. True courage, I say, does not come out of the heart, but out of something higher.

The strong men in this world have been strong, not in their own heart, but in their reliance upon something higher and stronger than that. You must get at the heart to find the spring and power of nobleness; but when you get at it, the strength is not there; it comes from something higher. So there is great force in the words of the Psalmist: "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I"—feeling as though when the heart went, everything went. The intellect may become dim, but we can wait till the light breaks through it; our moral purposes may grow weak, but we can try to do better; but when the heart is overwhelmed—the timid, shrinking heart—when sorrow comes upon us, when the daylight of God's goodness darkens and blackens, and the heart seems gone, then we must cry, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Yes, that is a grand prayer—is there a man who does not need to utter it? Is there a man who can say, "I am contented with earthly good, I am strong in my resources, I need nothing higher than myself?"

"Lead me to the rock." It is the fittest comparison in the world. There are times when we need shade like the shadow of a great rock. Prosperity, I think, is the greatest trial that a man can go through—worse than adversity. The trial of faith in prosperity is terrible. We talk of trial in trouble. That is the time faith is born. Look at those who have the most faith, and they are not those who have the most hap-

piness. That poor old widow, wrapped in her weeds, who has laid her last son in the grave, what a beautiful faith she has, burning like an eternal lamp in the sepulcher of the loved ones! That heart that has been scarred and crushed, only holds its trust more firmly in the Infinite. But the man who has been fed and crammed with worldly good is often prone to say, "Who is God, that I should praise him?" If man knew his danger, while he would thank God for prosperity, he would pray always, "In my prosperity and happiness be with me, like a rock that is higher than I, and give me a cool and sanctifying shadow."

Then there are times when we need a rock for shelter. When troubles, cares, and oppositions come upon us, and we find ourselves unable to withstand them, we need something like a rock to cover us. When pelts too fiercely the storm, and too great a torrent of sorrow is poured out upon us, then we need the shelter of a rock that is higher than we.

There are times, too, when we need something like a rock, upon which we can lean. Our friends are passing away, disappointments come upon us, we are reminded of the mutability of human life; we want something solid, like a rock, to support us, a foundation for the soul to stand upon. Wealth is uncertain; we want something enduring—something that can not be shaken or removed.

There is a great deal of significance in the saying of the ancient mathematician, that if he had a point upon

which he could place his lever, he could move the world. If a man can get one fact, and not the semblance of a fact, he can move the world. We want something solid, something high, that shall lift us up above all transitoriness—something strong, upon which we can depend. And when changes come, as they will, when death's touch is upon us, making us to feel that our hold on earth is giving way, then shall we not pray, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I!" Now and ever, in joy and sorrow, in good and evil, while we are in life and strength, let us cling to that sure support; and when earth itself is dissolving beneath our feet, let us look up with steadfast hope to the Rock that is higher than we.



CONCEPTIONS OF RELIGION.

What went ye out into the wilderness to see?—Matt. xi. 7.

I TAKE these words in their connection with the three or four verses following, in which the same question is reiterated. They were addressed, you will remember, to the multitude, after certain messengers whom John the Baptist sent to Jesus had accomplished their mission and retired; and the repeated question refers to that great preacher and reformer. Our Saviour asks the people for what purpose they had flocked to the ministry of John. Was it merely to see a reed shaken by the wind that they had gone out into the wilderness of Jordan? And he inquires again, Was it to see a man clothed in soft raiment? And again, Was it to see only a prophet? Each of these questions implied a negative answer, and Jesus goes on to say, "A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet; for this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." And then he proceeds to unfold the proper character of John, and his intimate relations to the expected Messiah.

With some difference in place and time, it seems to me that these questions are as applicable to the mass of the people now, as when they were first uttered. Now, as then, they suggest the different conceptions of religion which prevail in the minds of men. Indeed, in this matter, I think we may divide men into different classes, each marked by some dominant conception of religion, which corresponds with sufficient accuracy to the different ideas or motives indicated in the passages connected with the text.

In the first place, there are those whose idea or feeling of religion is a weak, vacillating, or vague principle. It has no strong or no prominent hold in their minds and hearts, or it is regarded as a mere abstraction. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" asks Jesus, "A reed shaken by the wind?" Now these words are capable of two interpretations. First, they may have a literal reference to the reeds which grew on the banks of the Jordan, and the question, therefore, may imply that it surely could not have been with such a trivial motive as to look upon the commonplace scenery in that region, that the people went crowding into the wilderness, but that a higher motive impelled them—a more worthy purpose than merely to see a reed shaken by the wind, or to look at a man clothed in soft raiment. And yet, my friends, to how many is religion hardly a more important matter even than this—a matter of mere curiosity. How many there are who owe the only interest they feel in religious subjects

merely to some transient excitement, like wind blowing among reeds, or some peculiarity of manner, or method, like soft raiment. They flock to listen to some sensation topic, or to admire and wonder at some peculiar style of delivery or expression in the preacher. They rush together as they would to some extraordinary dramatic performance; or with the same feeling with which they would throng to the place where some maddened husband shoots his wife's paramour; or where some noted politician is found dead and robbed. They go merely with a morbid interest to hear what the preacher will say about this or that occurrence, and to prolong the newspaper excitement of the week with a text from the Bible on Sunday. Now I do not say that exciting events of the week should never be noticed on Sunday. On the contrary, I believe that the preacher may take an illustration of the eternal truths which he preaches from anything that will embody and vivify those truths, and that for the most wholesome and spiritual purposes, the prevailing current of popular thought and feeling may be led into religious and devout channels. Religion has no limited or monopolized phraseology. Every great fact of nature, or of society, may be transmuted into a parable of the divine word, even as Jesus found the witnesses of his truth in the lilies that waved in the field before him, and in the fisherman casting his net into the sea. Bring forth out of the treasury things new and old, so that the eternal verity of Christian teaching

may be aided in its way to the minds and hearts of men by a perpetual freshness.

I am speaking now of the motives and feelings with which people are impelled to the ministrations of religion, and I say they are often motives and feelings of mere curiosity, the object being simply to prolong the period of excitement, to work upon the nerves, to stir up the imagination, or to produce, in some way or other, a startling effect. Religion itself, speaking through these things, has no more vital purpose or result than a reed shaken by the wind.

I think many a man has felt this difficulty in the present day, in the fact that quiet, sober themes, calmly treated, can hardly find a place—can hardly get a hearing. People find them dull and stupid; they complain that they do not wake them up. They must have a gospel hot and spiced, and therefore a great deal of our religious preaching has become a kind of Sabbath performance announced in great hand-bills or advertisements, with capital letters, and with sensation notices. Or if this is not the object with which many people come to the ministrations of religion, it is perhaps merely the preacher's manner that attracts them. It is not the things he says, but his odd way of saying them, his curious, original manner, his dramatic power. Or, perhaps, with a great many, it is because some ministers look interesting in the pulpit, have an engaging manner, and an impressive style. All this is apart from the real purpose and efficacy of

the truth, and is just as trivial as though the people of Palestine had gone into the wilderness to see a reed shaken by the wind, or a man clothed in soft raiment.

I say, then, if we interpret the words of the text to mean that Christ referred literally to the reeds of Jordan, it still illustrates that unimportant curiosity with which a large class wait upon the ministration of religion. But if, as seems most likely, these words are meant to describe the conceptions or preconceptions of the multitude respecting John, I repeat, they fitly represent a certain class in regard to religion. For after all, it may be said of the mass, that their feeling in regard to religion is not one of curiosity. That, at any particular time, may be the predominant element or aspect of the case, but in all men there is a deep sense of something in the thing itself, and not in the mere occasion or mere manner of presenting it. Religion is felt to be—though often very vaguely, very fitfully—a vital interest in the world—something that can not be voted out of the universe—something that will push its way, and make its claim, no matter what other interests are crowded on the human heart. Yet while there may be this feeling to which I allude, men look upon religion, and accept its ministration, very much as a certain class would seem to have accepted John the Baptist; they look upon it as something weak, vacillating, and vague—nothing that is strong, pervading, and deep. In one word, religion to them is not a reality in its height, breadth, and

depth. The notion of it quivers in their minds like a reed shaken with the wind. Religion is not held by the world at large to be a strong principle—something fitted for our maturity, for our manhood, for the ripeness of life, for the shock of action, for the world's great work; but something for our sickness, for our trouble, for our day of darkness, for our hour of death. Men do not take hold of it as they take hold of scientific principles, and make it the prime standard by which they test things. They do not take hold of it as they do of an interest in trade, and make it uppermost in every purchase and sale they make. It is held slightly as something which they do not really need. They say practically, "We do not want it when we are strong and well, but when we are weak and sick; we do not need it in the shock of the world, when we have something else to attend to; but when we are dying—to speak words of comfort and triumph to us." Men ignore the fact that the strongest principle in this world is the religious principle; that the manliest element in the human soul is the religious element; that the clearest and surest guide for the most common and practical affairs of life is religion.

Shrewd men of the world think that religion has no business with the affairs of men, in the rush of action. And in politics it is well known that conscience is deliberately ignored, and the teachings of Jesus Christ thrust aside. Political parties are based upon the platform of vacillating policy, and held together by

the weak bands of worldly expediency. They thrust great religious questions out of the political field. Anything that is deep enough to touch the conscience, is too deep to carry Presidents into the chair. Put it one side; it is not available; that is the motto of politicians. What is it but saying that religion is unsuited for strong, practical action, and is adapted only for the flimsiest kind of life?

On the contrary, my friends, I think we do not need religion so much in retirement as in the shock of action—not so much when we are shut in from the world, as when the great waves of temptation are pressing upon us—not so much for private as for public action. For, after all, private action is more apt, I think, to be shaped by conscience than public action. A duel is now held by many to be despicable, but war is not looked upon as a very great evil. Public action is not so far ahead in the Christian course as private. The law of conscience is not recognized in national policy as in individual actions, and men will do a thing as President, Governor, or politician, that they would not do as private citizens. The principles of Jesus Christ are very commonly discarded in public action. Religion is looked upon as a reed shaken with the wind—as a thing to be taken hold of at the last hour. When a man is drifting down the river of death, and there is nothing else that he can take hold of, then he seizes religion, and clings to that. He feels then as the sick man did, who, when he was told that he must die, answered,

“Well, then, at last I must think of God.” Men keep out of their minds as long as they can the everlasting truth of God—the eternal interests of their souls, the light of life, the interpretation of the world’s mysteries, and then, when all things else are gliding from beneath their feet, they cling to the reed shaken by the wind on the banks of the Jordan of death.

Or else men hold religion in this manner: If they do not conceive it to be something weak and vacillating, they at least hold it in a weak and vacillating way—they hold it fitfully. How many there are who are very religious in one hour, and very wicked in the next—praying on Sunday, and cheating on Monday—honest to-day, and rushing into some infamous bargain to-morrow—carried away in one year by the wave of religious excitement, shouting hallelujahs to the throne of God, and in another year as cold and dead as fish that have been left high and dry by the receding tide. No wave of excitement now—no life—all fitful, momentary, transient.

Or else it is merely in a traditional way that men hold religion. They believe in it because their fathers and grandfathers believed in it. They have never tested it by their own consciences, but merely taken it as they take their estates, their houses, or their pews in church.

Or perhaps religion is held by them because it is respectable. How many there are resting with perfect composure, merely on the respectability of their creed!

They know it is fashionable and proper, and that is all they care about. They are contented with a creed that is orthodox or respectable, just as they are gratified with a nice pair of gloves or a smooth hat. It is proper, it is respectable, and therefore they suppose that any one who utters something a little bold and heretical—who dares to take an independent course that runs counter to the prevailing faith—must be some terrible fellow who has committed a great outrage. True, they do not know in what respect; they have never verified it themselves; they suppose they are on the right side, of course, but they do not know why, having never tested a single principle that they profess. They are horrified at the heretic's heresy and the infidel's infidelity. How do they know the heretic is wrong, or the infidel mistaken, except by the common report of the respectable party of which they are merely excrescences? They have never exercised their own reason upon the prevailing problems of religion, but simply because the majority of their faith have declared against the heretic, they fall in and denounce him. What do they know of the heretic's struggles or the infidel's sorrows? What do they know of the reasons that have led the man to be an infidel—how he has endeavored to sound the problems of life, it may be by a false method, and has reached a wrong conclusion? What do they know of the honesty of purpose with which he has reached that result? Little do they imagine that the heretic's error or the infidel's false-

hood may be nobler than their truth, because it is held in a nobler way and vindicated by a manlier effort. It is sad to think how much of this respectable religion there is, that has about as much strength and vigor in it as a reed shaken by the wind.

I observe, in the second place, that there is a class to whom religion is merely an affair of sentiment. They are represented by those people who went to John the Baptist, expecting to see a man clothed in soft raiment. There are many people to whom religion is merely a matter of raiment and upholstery—sleeves and cassocks, table covers and altar cloths—nice proprieties and esthetic beauty. I have no objection to esthetics in religion—to that element which has built the cathedrals and produced some of the most splendid works of genius; but I have an objection to a mere imitation of these things growing out of no deep want or aspiration, but merely out of a kind of esthetic impressibility. In the matter of the liturgy there are those to whom it is a necessity. It is consecrated in their deepest affections; it is hallowed by their most sacred memories; it is associated with their holiest duties in life. They can pray most devoutly and meditate most profoundly through its set forms. But it does not follow that other kinds of people, educated to a different set of expressions, should adopt a religious form because it is impressive and beautiful. It is merely substituting esthetics for religion; and people go to hear vespers and fine music

with just such feelings as they go to hear *Casta Diva* or the *March in the Prophet*. Where this kind of worship comes out of the soul—the burning desire of the heart—I honor it. There is a great deal of grandeur and power in the old English liturgy—one of the noblest compositions ever written—and I can conceive how persons, born and baptized in that church, are attached to it. But to hold to it for its mere esthetic effect and impressibility is to make it a matter of soft raiment.

So, in another view, religion is with some a matter of soft raiment, from the idea that it is merely a matter of comfort and consolation. Men look at it as a very soothing, cheering thing. And so it often is, no doubt. God forbid that I should deny the great consoling power of the religion of Jesus Christ, or fail to bear witness to the truth that it alone can comfort the troubled soul and lift up the heart that is bowed down with sorrow. But we must not forget that it has a strengthening and inspiring influence, also, as well as a comforting and consoling power—that it encourages as well as soothes, and makes men brave as well as confiding.

Others do not like to have a religion that has anything to do with agitation or reform. They do not believe in bringing into the pulpit on Sunday matters that agitate the community through the week. They want to come to church to be quiet and comfortable. "Do not talk to us," they say, "upon questions that

are like fire applied to gunpowder. Don't shatter the brandy flasks, and disturb our domestic peace. Don't bring in the 'negro question.' Point us to the mild and gentle Jesus; we don't want the chains of the African paraded before us. True, Jesus Christ did say something about breaking yokes, and letting the oppressed go free. True, John the Baptist was a little scathing when he spoke to the people of his time. But those cases are rather exceptional and miraculous; we don't, at all events, require any such preaching in our day." What a notion this is of the religion of Jesus Christ—that it is simply a calming, soothing, comforting thing, and has in it no thunder and lightning of everlasting truth!

Then there are some who don't want to hear sharp, hard epithets from the preacher. Some of our Universalist people are even shocked when they hear such a word as "hell" or "damnation" from the pulpit. It is in the Bible, to be sure; but because it has been caricatured in the gross imagery of a dark theology, and interpreted to mean undying agonies, they do not like to hear even the word mentioned. Some want classic eloquence. They will hardly admit the vernacular at all; there must be no chopping and splitting; the preacher must use no axe and beetle; only a smoothing-plane and polisher. I do not deny that there are tendencies in our times to go into extremes—but if a man is religiously in earnest he will not run into them; his theme, his natural reverence, will keep

him within their bounds. But this putting aside every sharp word, because it is not classic or soft, is all nonsense. The most efficient preaching in this world, the preaching that has carried the most weight with it, has always been sharp, strong, severe, and sometimes what would be called coarse. Look at Hugh Latimer, in his sermon on the plow, in which he says to the rulers and officers, "Look to your charge, and rather be glad to amend your ill living, than to be angry when told of your faults." And in speaking of certain prelates and bishops he says, "Some of them wear velvet slippers. Such fellows ought not to be admitted to preach. I pray God to amend such worldly fellows, or else they are not meet to be preachers." Such was the plain, direct style of speech with which old Latimer addressed the English prelates and bishops. Well might such a man exclaim to his companion when the martyr-fires played around them, "Be of great comfort; we shall kindle such a fire to-day in England as I trust will not be put out."

So Robert South used plain words, calling things by their right names. "Can anything in nature," says he, "be more odious than a wicked old man who, after three-score years in the world, after so many sacraments, sermons, and other means of grace taken in and digested, shall continue as arrant a hypocrite and disbeliever in religion as ever; still dodging and doubling, never opening his mouth in earnest except when he eats or breathes? Or can anything be so vile as

an open sensualist creeping to the devil on all fours, so wretched, despised, and abandoned by all, that even his own vices forsake him?" Some people think that would be very coarse preaching, but I have no doubt it stuck like an arrow in men's hearts, when, if he had preached soft words, his hearers would have felt as if they had taken a glass of champagne, and have expressed themselves as glad that they had a minister who didn't meddle with politics and other agitating topics. A preacher who is in earnest can not choose his words always; the truth comes sometimes in its common dress, and you can not tear away the epithet from it any more than you can tear the living tissue from the body. So far as preaching is concerned, language should not be used, as Talleyrand said of diplomacy, to conceal the meaning, but to make it plain. It should be a probe for the conscience, rather than an emollient for the skin.

In the next place, there are those who regard religion simply in its supernatural character. They look for nothing less remarkable or worthy than a prophet. They apprehend religion merely and solely in its connection with miracles—with supreme power and unseen things. They are of that class that come out to see a prophet. I am sure I need not dwell upon the fact that religion is regarded by many as above this life, overshadowing and eclipsing it, instead of touching and consecrating all the facts of this life, and linking them in one web of vast relations with eternal and

unseen things. We have got to learn how much religion has to do with every day, and not merely with the next world; how much it has to do with every thought, and not merely with some grand performance of our lives; how it makes all our life far from common or commonplace, since it makes us see the supernatural everywhere.

Two able men, in our day, have written two remarkable books. One finds only nature in all things, and the other brings the supernatural to overwhelm the natural. Now, I repeat, religion brings out of life the truth of things natural and supernatural. When we take the exclusively supernatural phase of religion, two results come out of it all the world over. Religion, on the one hand; is to some a matter of darkness and gloom—the revelation of a terrible reality overhanging them, and threatening to crush them—and they are weighed down with the nightmare of superstition. On the other hand, being considered as a thing above this world—something unworldly and unreal—a great many do not regard it with any kind of faith at all, and they retire to the opposite pole of skepticism. Thus you have this remarkable trait of mankind, that the most superstitious man to-day becomes the greatest infidel to-morrow, and the boldest infidel of to-day runs into the greatest credulity to-morrow. Religion has become to them a matter of great sights and sounds.

Now no man, it seems to me, can for a moment deny that there exists the great element of the super-

natural in religion. I see it in the religion of Jesus Christ. I have never been troubled with the miracles that he wrought so long as I believe in the divine spirit that shines through him. I have supposed that the hand that formed the human body can raise that body from the dead; that the power that bids the waves roll, can command them to cease; that the sovereign agent that moves the mechanism of nature, can bid it stop; and when I see a life like that of Jesus, so perfect, so full of the Godhead, it does not trouble me when I hear him say, "Lazarus, come forth!" or to the tempest, "Peace, be still." It all seems naturally to flow out of such a being as that; it is not a mere prodigy—something wonderful—but something in perfect harmony with the whole life. You can not tear away the miracles from Jesus Christ, any more than you can his personal features. Take them away, and you have broken up the entire fabric of the Gospel. They stand there naturally, and yet supernaturally. Show me a being like Christ, and I will believe that he can perform miracles like him. But where is such a life to be found? We have not seen it. A being in perfect conformity with God can do the works that Christ did.

Nor am I troubled about prophecy. A prophecy is a great and glorious fact, but is it more wonderful and glorious than the event?

So, then, I see the authenticity of the supernatural in Christianity, and I see the office of it. It had an

office in the early days that it has not now. It would strike the senses then as it does not now, because we must go up the chain of evidence to justify the fact of miracles. I do not believe the supernatural is the foundation of religion, but that religion is the foundation of the supernatural. I believe that miracles are a deduction from Jesus Christ, and not Jesus Christ a deduction from the miracles. The supernatural, therefore, is not the exclusive element in religion. The great power of the Gospel to me is its immediate application to my wants, to my soul's life, to my best desires, to my immortal prospects. That is the everlasting verification of it to me. I accept the supernatural in the religion of Jesus Christ, but I find him not merely a prophet, but more than a prophet.

Religion is not then a reed shaken by the wind, nor a man clothed with soft raiment, nor a prophet. It is something higher. "This is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." That was said of John the Baptist; it is equally true concerning religion itself; it is equally applicable to us, leading us to a true conception of religion. For religion is not an end—it is a means. Some people think that to get religion is to get the end of life. I say that religion is not the end of life. I say a man may get religion sometimes, and be very far from the end for which God appointed him. Sometimes religion is made to override morality; men carry it out into asceticism. Then another class

of men arise who preach mere morality—our duties to ourselves, our families, and to humanity. And then, again, somebody comes in and injects the great principle of religion, and so we keep vacillating. This shows that the end of the Gospel is something more than religion. Religion is a messenger of God, so to speak, touching the deep sanctities of the conscience, waking up our intuitions of God and immortality, and by its vast realities and rich truths leading to some higher end. And what is that end to which religion leads us? Its great end is, to bring Christ into the soul, even as John the Baptist introduced him into the world. When the spirit of Jesus Christ comes into our souls and we become one with him, when his life becomes our life—his life of holiness, perfect obedience and self-sacrifice—then we reach the great end of our being. So it is not merely religion as an element of the supernatural that we are to seek, but it is the end to which we come through religion, namely, to communion and oneness with Jesus Christ.

And now, my friends, comes the question, what is religion to you? You attend upon its ministration, you hear its word, you have some notion about it; what is it? A reed shaken by the wind? A vague, vacillating principle? Something that you put clear aside as having no real practical claim upon your active moments and the daily work of life? Is it something that you hold traditionally or respectably—a man clothed in soft raiment? Is it merely something com-

forting, soothing, and calming—something that makes you feel good? Is it something that inspires you to duty, or rebukes you? Is it something merely supernatural that you hardly believe—something awful, concerning the nature of which you have no clear conception? Or is it Jesus Christ within you the hope of glory—his life, his power taken into your heart; animating your soul, inspiring you in every action and breath of your being? That is the great end, and if you have not reached it, with peculiar force comes to you the question of our Saviour, “What went ye out into the wilderness to see?”



THE BREAD OF LIFE.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.—Matthew iv. 4.

AS Jesus was in all points tempted like as we are, it seems no strained or fanciful interpretation of these transactions in the wilderness to say, that they represent different classes or orders of temptations as they occur in the personal history of men; and if such is the case, then it may be affirmed that the particular temptation to which the words in the text refer, symbolizes the distinction and the conflict between the claims of man's higher and his lower life. Or rather, I may say, these words vindicate the jurisdiction of man's higher life against the encroachments or usurpations of his lower life. Here was an appeal to hunger; a solicitation to sacrifice right and duty to appetite. No matter what particular interpretation we give to this narrative; whether we take it as recording a literal temptation by a personal Satan; whether we take it as recording a vision or a suggestion arising in the mind of Christ from the nature of the conditions in which he was placed; the essence of the temptation was that he

should pervert the powers which were given him for the highest ends, for God's service, to the temporary gratification of appetite. The reply which Jesus gave was, "Man shall not live by bread alone." There is another and a nobler condition of living: man's truest and most essential life is sustained in other ways than through his bodily appetite. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

It seems to me that whatever else may be indicated by these words, these two different conditions of life are indicated. There is a life which is nourished by bread alone, which depends upon meat, drink, raiment, and the class of material, bodily utilities which bread represents and symbolizes. And observe that the claims of this kind of life are not denounced or repudiated in the passage before us. "Man shall not live by bread alone," is the declaration. These claims of the body, these material necessities, are allowed. While man abides in his present form, and is involved in this earthly condition, he must live by bread. Christianity is not asceticism. Throughout the New Testament you will not find a hint that anything that is made has been made in vain, or is to be looked upon as a mistake of the Creator, to be denounced and avoided. It is a very singular fallacy, it seems to me that takes the present condition of the world as the rectification of a mistake on the part of God, instead of being a development of his steadfast intention from

the very first until now. Therefore I say that bread has its place. Whatever God has ordained of bodily want or of material necessity is in its sphere good and right, and should be so regarded; if for no other reason, because God has evidently ordained it. But whenever in the course of man's career upon this earth the question does arise, whether the life of the body or the life of the soul, whether the life of the senses or the life of the reason and the affections, is to be sacrificed, whenever any such conflict shall arise between the two, then we are to fall back upon this declaration of the Saviour—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out the mouth of God." That such a conflict often does arise, I hardly need say; it is amply testified to in every man's experience, and may be illustrated as I proceed with my remarks.

Let me then speak of these two conditions and ideals of life, each in its sphere necessary and compatible with the other, and yet let me so characterize them that, under any pressure of temptation, under any crisis of self-question, we shall have no doubt as to which is the highest and the truer life. In the first place, then, there is that condition of being in which man lives by bread, or by that class of things which bread symbolizes and represents. Now, if we take this condition of life apart from its true relations, if, so to speak, we come to live in that way alone, just consider what it implies, and to what it leads. In the first place it

represents man as utterly subservient to material necessities. We know how much force and meaning there are in that phrase, "the necessities of life;" the bread which we must eat, or die; the clothing we must have, or perish. We know how all earthly conditions stand secondary to these. We know, also, how these things, and things akin to them, are often made to take place above all spiritual and divine things, bread alone being considered the great object of life, and man, the whole man, is made subservient to material necessities. Therefore, in the second place, look at the consequences of this condition of life where man makes himself, or is made wholly subservient to material necessities; it makes him to be merely an instrument. Now, as I view the purpose of man's creation, he was made to be an end. But when, either by the force of circumstances, or by his own will, he is subservient to material circumstances, he is made to be merely an instrument. In order to procure bread, which is one of the means of living, his work, his services, must be of sufficient value to others in the great exchange of the world, to receive from them in return these means of living. Now, let us recognize the vast importance and benefit of this condition of things, which is the foundation of the great ordinance of labor, and the beautiful law of reciprocity. It is a curious and wonderful fact that the springs of man's noblest life are implanted in necessity. God has not let man go alone in the world. He walks in leading strings in the highest action of

his being ; there is a mold cast for him. We may call this a doctrine of divine decrees, or what we will, there is a mold cast for him, by which in the outset he is started, by which he is linked to that condition of things, which, if followed out, will lead to his highest good. For instance, it is not left to man's indolence to pick out that course of life which will lead to his highest good. He is forced by necessity into labor. The great law of effort, the only condition by which any true development either of the body or the soul is attained, has its spring, in the first place, in material necessity. I repeat, man is not left to his own conceit ; he is not left to pick out the way of action ; he is forced into effort ; a wondrous and beautiful necessity, which arouses the mightiest impulses, which unfolds the best faculties of our nature, which wakes up and dignifies the whole man, making his sinewy right arm a lever which moves the world, and the beaded sweat that glistens on his forehead more glorious than a diadem ; out of whose inexorable hands emerges beauty, out of which comes all the marshaled utilities of civilization, and the attendant train of art, invention, and star-crowned science ; a grand march and procession of power, and peace, and order, transforming the wilderness into a garden, and making the solitary place glad—steadily as the sun shines and the earth turns, sowing its seed, binding its sheaves, and from age to age, and from continent to continent, unrolling a splendid panorama of achievement and of victory.

How beneficial is this requisition for labor, when we come to look at it, this requisition for effort, by the necessity of having bread! Man, made a creature of appetite, of hunger, and of thirst, by the imperious demands of these appetites, is forced into those efforts which lead to the highest and most glorious results. How intimately has God interwoven that kind of labor which comes by the sweat of the brow, with the greatest problems and the most momentous interests of humanity. Neglect this great interest of agriculture, the working for our daily bread, and where is the foundation of all your glory? What are your vast navies, your wooden walls? what is all the gold of your mines and your placers? nay, what are your institutions of education and of government even, if in any way you neglect or pervert this great fundamental interest? Why, every political economist knows that the bread question is the deep question. Upon the conditions which spring out of the earth depend thrones and dynasties, peace and war, order and anarchy. Take the bread from the mouths of the starving populations of Europe, and questions would be settled in a month which diplomatists, playing at peace and war, take years to settle. Therefore I say, God has made this a fundamental necessity, and out of it springs the great benefit of that effort, by which alone comes any true development of body or soul. And another element of man's noblest life is unfolded by the necessity for immediate action; by his working for his daily bread.

For another consequence of this law of effort is mutual help, mutual service. Men can not live isolated. One man can not utterly separate himself from another, even if he would. Each needs the other, and it is found so all the world over. Man shall not live alone. He is not in himself completely furnished. The animal may prowl solitary for his food ; let him, if he can, live in isolation. It is not in the nature of man to be alone. But how shall these noble affections, these qualities for mutual love and service in man, be called out? By placing the necessities of our daily bread in such a way that one man can not obtain the whole, but that it must be obtained by the system of giving and receiving ; very selfish, perhaps, in its origin, yet leading, by-and-by, to a nobler and more spiritual comprehension of service. Man, learning, by his bodily necessities, the intimate dependence he has upon his fellow-man, is led, by-and-by, to see the spiritual affinities which link him to his fellow-men, and the noblest results of Christian, self-sacrificing love come out of that necessity, the want of daily bread. No man alone can get his daily bread ; he must be helped by others in one form or another. All the magnificent structures of commerce, of trade, or reciprocal service, throughout society, the wide world over, rests upon this fact ; the necessities of our daily bread depending upon the mutual action of one upon another, by which man, needing bread and the means of living, must in some degree become an instrument,

must bend himself to serve and minister for ends out of himself.

But, on the other hand, can we fail to recognize the immense evil of that state of things in which man becomes and remains a mere instrument, in one way or another living only for bread, living only for an end out of himself, living merely in subservience to that class of things which bread represents. There is the great evil in this world, and there spring up temptations similar in character to those which assailed Christ in the wilderness. Thus man sometimes becomes merely an instrument for getting bread, nothing more, nothing less. Sometimes he is so by the very force of circumstances. Man—and it is an awful thing to think of—is sometimes forced by circumstances to be merely an instrument to get daily bread. He can just manage to gasp, grasp, and live in this world. Ample as the earth is, and crowned by God with plenty, hundreds and thousands of millions are merely able, by every effort of muscle, and brain, and soul, to get their daily bread. Oh, it is an awful thing when man is reduced to be merely an apparatus for breathing and digesting! Be it the man's fault, or the fault of society, it is none the less terrible. There are a great many estimates to be made in the light of the fact that man should in any way be reduced to such a condition as to be merely an instrument to get his daily bread. We may estimate the worth of efforts made to elevate the social condition of man. Utter these questions; say anything about

false relations between capital and labor, about the working-man having his rights, you are at once looked upon as revolutionary, as striking at the best interests of society, or, at best, propounding mere dreams and vagaries. It may be that these questions are mere dreams to those whose lines are fallen in pleasant places, for whom have been furnished a pillow and cushion, a full table and an easy chair. Yet there are men set desperately to grapple for their lives, drowning in the midst of plenty, clutching at the food that drifts by them, and getting it as they best can. Oh, this is a terrible question, this bread question. But it is a question which must be solved by every effort of a true heart and a clear brain. It must be solved by attempts made day by day, year by year, to get at the bottom of the problem if we can, and elevate men above that condition in which they are merely instruments for getting their daily bread. In this way we are to value our institutions which give education to all, for in proportion as man becomes developed in brain and soul, just in that proportion is he elevated above that condition in which he is the mere instrument of getting his daily bread. And therefore it is to God, and under God, glory to all true men, who have thus given us, in this land of ours, our free schools, our public institutions, where the rich and the poor come together, and drink from the same fountain of learning, the same elements of knowledge. Wo to the man who would overturn these institutions, who

would in any way injure them, or limit their capacity for good!

And thus, also, may we have some measure of estimating the abomination and the wickedness of systems that tend to intensify such a condition, and to make it final; that tend to make man, and to regard him, merely as a piece of mechanism, as muscle and stomach, as a steam-engine, taking in so much food and giving out so much work. Do you not see the essential degradation of such a condition as this? You must either revise your definition of what constitutes man, either reduce those called men to the grade of animals, or, making them out to be men, you must elevate them above that condition in which they are merely as machines, as brutes. Do you not see that no human law, however stringently enacted it may be, that no man, or set of men, has any right, before God, to make one who is a man, endowed with the faculties of a man, with soul, heart, will, affections, and an immortal capacity—to make him a mere machine for receiving food and giving out work. And whatever perpetuates this is abominable in the sight of God. The moment you come to see men reduced to such a condition as that of a mere instrument for daily bread, that moment you must abominate any institution that intensifies and keeps them in such a condition.

Moreover, from this point of view, we should learn charity; we should remember that what may be no temptation to us, is a keen temptation to many.

When a man sees nothing in this world to live for but his daily bread, and when that is taken away from him, he must perish. I tell you there are some sins which, if we do not pardon, we should look upon in the light of the merciful Jesus; we should look at the power of temptation of hunger, not only for a man himself, but on account of his wife and children; we should look at a great many sins which society pardons and passes by, with hardly a condemning voice, ere we blame him too harshly for what he may have done under this strong temptation.

I need hardly dwell upon that other phase of this condition, where men, not by any social necessity, but by their own will and inclination, have become merely instruments of appetite. There are thousands who of their free choice and will have reduced themselves to be mere slaves of their appetites, who live for bread alone, who are mere slugs of animality, merely breathing and crawling upon the face of the earth; not living for bread even, but for that which might have been made bread, but which has been turned into poison; living for sensual gratification, and for the coarsest material ends. Are you not inclined, whenever you see a man like this, to say—Oh, man, heir of immortality, endowed by God with a spirit that shall go beyond the stars, made to live forever, made with capacities that might elevate you nearer and nearer to Him, nearer to His love, His purity, His goodness; are you so base, so far aside from that great end which He

has set before you, as to have become a mere slave of the appetite, a mere instrument for ministering to sensual gratification?

But sometimes man is not a mere instrument for getting bread—not a mere instrument for meat and drink—but makes himself an instrument for that class of things which bread symbolizes and represents. Thus he may become a mere instrument of accumulation, and that not for an end, not for a good purpose, not for some ideal which he sets before himself, not to fulfill some noble plan and pattern of life, but merely for its own sake. He values it not for what it does for him, but for what it is in itself. How many men you see in this world who have become merely the pack-horses of their own possessions; who go through life the veriest slaves to that which they toil for, wasting their health and strength, and it may be their higher powers—even their consciences and souls—in the mere effort to accumulate! How many men of this sort you see stumbling along in life like a camel with his load! In fact, you do not see the man himself—only the pack of his possessions on his back. He finds it hard work to squeeze through the needle's eye; and when he dies he is hardly missed; for that by which he was known—that of which he was the slave, and not the master—remains behind. He is not missed so long as his prominent characteristic is not gone. A man ought to live in such a way—at least to have so much of a soul—that when he dies, whatever may be

his possessions, or his lack of them, he will at least be missed. It is a terrible thing for a man to live so that when he is dead he is not missed, and there is no real sorrow for him—no saying, “Here was a man that helped fill up the order of God’s universe; that touched some secret chord of the human heart that nobody else could touch; a man for whom we shall mourn, and the like of whom we shall look for in vain.”

But a man that simply loads himself down with possessions, of which he has no actual need, when he dies, his possessions remain, and he slips out of them as a little insect might slip out of some parasite shell into which it has ensconced itself, into the grave, and is forgotten.

So, too, taking the bread standard as the exclusive standard of life, a man becomes a mere instrument in pursuit of popularity, of office, or any other worldly advantage, with a soul to let, and a self-serviceable conscience thrown in, like diplomatists that play all manner of variations upon one selfish string, slimy politicians who have wriggled through every kennel, and left their zig-zag trail upon most opposite measures and most inconsistent platforms.

You perceive that in this condition of life, where a man lives for bread alone, he becomes a mere instrument, and is not an end in himself. He lives for something out of himself—merely to get the means of living—for his daily bread, or for some interest which bread symbolizes and represents. The Christian theory, I

repeat, is not asceticism. It does not teach that living for bread up to the demands of material necessity is wrong, but that living for bread alone, or any earthly good alone, becoming its tool, its slave, its instrument, is a deep and dreadful error—is sin.

Of course you see that out of this condition there come peculiar standards of measurement. You see that men who live in this condition have different standards from those who live in another condition of life. For to them a thing is valuable in proportion as it serves those material and worldly ends. Living for bread alone, they estimate everything by the bread standard. For instance, in reference to a great reform which proposes to benefit man, to remove a formidable evil, to strike at a prevailing sin, the question that occurs to that man at once is, "Won't it damage profit? won't it interfere with the interests of property?" You can not reason with men who take such a standard as that; for, as I have often taken occasion to say, it is not the intellect that needs to be convinced in any process of reasoning. Men are pretty much the same when they are looking from the same point of view—they are very much as their eyes see and their ears hear. It does not require great intellect or brain to see plain, palpable facts; but marshal before a man a truth that strikes at his interest, and you can not make him see it, with all the logic you can link from the morning stars to the earth, because he has a different standard of valuation from yours. You may say, "Here is woe,

here is redness of eyes, here is sorrow." He replies, "Very well, but we have got great property interests on the other side, and you must not damage these."

He can not measure the value of a principle that affects his own personal selfish interest. He does not value truth for what it may be in itself, but for its effects upon his interests. How many there are to whom religion itself is the merest sham and form; whose attendance at church is merely in deference to the feeling of popularity, or a desire to appear respectable, and maintain a good standing; who value no more God Almighty's truth, that is a salve for the soul, a light for the mind, a guide for the conscience, than the merest bauble in the world, but who play with it and use it the same as they would use anything else, for the promotion of their material interests alone. How many have made investments in profitable lies, with which they would not part for all the truth in the world, not knowing that no lie is profitable in its ultimate results!

By nothing do men differ so much as by their standards of valuation. In these the real man comes out. Here is one man who looks at a great picture, a fine work of art; to him it is nothing but colored canvas. He looks at a beautiful statue, and it is nothing but chiseled marble. He can not see why men admire such things, pay so much for them, and go so far to see them. He discovers nothing in them beyond the

merely material aspect, because his standard of valuation is simply from that point of life which is bounded by the bread interest.

Another man, in the commonest shell that is deposited on the dry beach, or in the merest weed that grows out of the chink in the wall, finds scope for deep and interesting research. He discerns as much the glory of God in the miniature world revealed in a single drop of water, as in a great planet. One man is overawed by the solemn aspect of the mountain, and the glory of the forest waving with the breath of the summer breeze. Another wonders how many acres of land there are and how much timber in it. That is all the universe is to him. So the characters of men are revealed according to their standard of valuation; and, I repeat, if a man's life is wholly down to the bread standard of life, he sees merely the material interests of this world. If he is a mere instrument, he values things only as they serve him as an instrument; but if he is an end, then he learns to value them as they serve him as an end.

Let me then, my friends, urge upon you that other and higher life—that point of view in which a man lives not for bread alone, but for “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”—not by bread, but by Him who creates the bread that sustains and nourishes us. What was the temptation of Jesus Christ when he lived in that high life? It was a transient thing. Did he need bread? You remember one

time during his ministry, when his disciples had gone into one of the cities of Samaria to buy meat, he sat talking with the woman at the well, unfolding the high truths of the Gospel; and when they came back and asked him to eat, he replied, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." So with every good man; he does not live merely by bread alone, but by that God from whom it comes. Such a man apprehends that he does not live by bread alone, even in regard to his literal sustenance. Do we think of the bread alone when it is placed on our tables? Are we not reminded from whence it comes—what wondrous mysteries have conspired to bring it there—the fair sunlight that shone upon the soil—the heavenly dew that moistened the earth—the mysterious processes of nature that brought forth, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear?" Does man live by bread alone, or by Divine wisdom, power, and goodness, which conspire in the wondrous loom of nature to weave the result and form the agency by which we get that bread?

My friends, when a man rises into this higher condition of life, he comes to the conclusion that he is not a mere instrument, but that he is an end in himself. I know the old catechism says, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever;" and that is true. Everything that is contained in that catechism is not true, I think, but that is. Man is made to glorify God. How? By becoming an end in himself. Just in proportion as he becomes unfolded

and all his faculties harmonized, just in proportion as his higher nature takes its true place, and his soul becomes sanctified, redeemed, and transformed into a true life, just in that proportion is God glorified.

God is glorious in everything he has made. His glory is revealed in the little blade of grass that begins to peep from underneath the winter ice; in the planet that flames with splendor in the heavens; but by nothing so much upon this earth as in man, a creature of intelligence, of immortal capacity, of ever-growing affections and powers; and in the perfection of man, in the full unfolding harmony and transfiguration of his nature, is God glorified. Therefore it is perfectly consistent to say that man is made for the glory of God. The first point to be attained with man as an end is to rise to the true conception of life. When he does this he has a different standard of value from that of the mere bread standard. The standard of value with him is whatever elevates and perfects his personality; not what he gets, not what he accumulates, not what only feeds one part of his nature, but what makes him great and good, strong and beautiful, and assimilates him to God and Christ. He stands in a different market with his wares, works for a higher end, and seeks to gain a more glorious result. He thinks of utilities in a larger and nobler sense than other men. That which they call useful may be so to him; but that which may be impracticable to them may be the most useful of all things to

him. He values everything that comes from the mouth of God, and lives by it—that is, all things that God gives, not merely to the body, but to the soul. Whatever proceeds from the essence, glory, and perfection of God, he values, and therefore whatever makes him richer in the perception of beauty, and gives him affinity with beauty, he values.

Sometimes people go to a rich man's house and wonder that he pays so much money for a picture. The money they think might bring in interest or might be applied to purposes of utility, and they consider it a waste to expend five or ten thousand dollars for a work of art. Little do they imagine how that picture enriches and refines that man's soul, elevating it to a higher conception of all beauty; how it enables him to understand why the swamp mists become festoons and upholsteries of glory before the setting sun; why the grass is green, the heavens blue, and the rolling waves of the sea are interlaced with threads of sunlight; because, viewing them as proceeding out of the mouth of God, he comprehends them, and says, "The money that I have given for it, that could not make me richer; but the beauty it gives me does make me richer, because it perfects me, and helps form me for an end."

Again, such a man values the true in the light of its truth, and not of its profit, and he would not give up that for anything else. The truth that proceeds out of the mouth of God he does not value as an end,

because viewed in the estimate I have now taken; even truth is not an end, but a means. For what is the object of truth? It is that we may know more truth; that we may become capable of comprehending truth; that we may be more loyal, more like God. I repeat, a man who takes this higher standard of life, values that which is true, and takes it as it comes out of the mouth of God. He does not take the mere word of man in all the perplexities of his reason, in all the darkness that falls upon his struggling soul; but he says, "Let me know what God requires of me."

Oh, how we do live upon traditions—upon the mere say-so of other people—what they think, what they believe—the current of popular conviction—instead of coming and taking the word out of the mouth of God! God gives it to the soul in free inspiration; if we open the windows of the soul to it, down will come the rain, and in will flow the sunshine. Oh, man, if you will only stand in a proper posture, God will give you His truth. Come to Him, and not to human creeds. Oh, forlorn, darkened spirit, distracted by human opinions, and what learned men say; cramped by dark theology; troubled by gloomy dogmas; hold on to the truth that comes from the word of God, and by that you shall live, and not by bread alone.

Moreover, a man who stands in this higher life, and takes this standard for his estimate, values the good in and for itself alone. He values it as it allies him to

God, as it makes him one with Christ and the Father. Oh, how that sentence is set forth and emphasized in the New Testament, which says, "That they may be one as we are one—one with me, as I am one with the Father!" That is the great end of man's being—to pass upward in the essential life of goodness, to the life that is exemplified in Jesus Christ. The man who has the true standard of action, values that more than anything else; and all things that mar that good, or hinder its attainment, are to him most to be dreaded and despised. It is not good or evil fortune; it is not sickness or health; it is not popularity or scorn that he cares for; but it is, that he may become good—one with God in goodness, one in that essential love that flowed in every artery of Jesus Christ.

Why should we not apprehend religion as intended to lead us to this great result—its real end and object—to make us one with God and one with Christ? Why should we not look upon it also as teaching us the real meaning of all retribution and of all reward? How many people are afraid of hell, afraid of punishment, afraid of vindictive, crushing wrath, sinking them lower and lower down in infamy, sorrow, and pain—not afraid of evil! They would roll that as a sweet morsel under their tongues, were it not for the penalty that clings to it and hedges it round. They have not taken the true standard of the higher life. The man who looks at evil and estimates it by the true standard, sees that in itself it is to be dreaded.

The awfulness of sin, the terribleness of being alienated from God, is what he dreads. "Oh," he says, "the darkest corner of the universe for me is heaven if God is with me, for his presence will make that darkness brighter than day; but heaven, as it is painted, with its turrets of gold, its crystal battlements, its clear, flowing river—not that would be the place for me, alienated from the spirit of God and from Jesus Christ. Give me goodness only; let me live in that; let me fall back upon that, and whatever may occur to me, I am strong and free in the possession of that goodness." Thus, you see, my friends, there are very different standards of estimating what is beautiful, true, and good. This is the apprehension of a man that lives on the plane of the higher life, who does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Having indicated these two kinds of life, I have sufficiently indicated the point of the most fearful temptations that occur in life. They are when man is tempted to sacrifice the interests of the higher life to the claims of the lower. I have shown you at the commencement how they are compatible—how the lower has its claims, and must be attended to; how, out of the necessities of the lower life, some of the greatest benefits and blessings spring. But I say, when the lower life presents one claim, and the higher another; when it is bread or truth; when it is worldly interest or goodness; when it is meanness or beauty; when it

is wrong or right—then can any man really hesitate to decide? Your decision will cost you fortune; what then? It brings you nearer to God. It will cost you property; what then? It makes you one with Christ. Oh, my friends, cling to the good, the true, the beautiful, molded, transfigured, and idealized in the spirit of Jesus Christ; take that as your standard, and make it the great element of your souls, that you may be one with God and Christ. And when temptation comes—when it says, “Live for the appetite, live for this world, live for the passing moment, live for selfish ends, live with false aims or mean standards,” oh, then, call up the image of Him who stood alone in the wilderness, with the dark shadows around him, with the fearful conflict raging within and without, and who, in the calm majesty of his spirit, said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Oh, martyr for righteousness! oh, sufferer for conscience' sake! oh, victim of temptation! alternating between right and wrong, take these strong words, let them be a trumpet-peal in your ear, uplifting your soul as on angels' wings, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

JOY OF THE ANGELS.

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—Luke xv. 10.

THIS assurance, coming from the lips of Jesus himself, exhibits Christianity, both in its spirit and in its grandeur. As you will remember, these words were spoken in reply to certain self-righteous formalists who shrunk with horror from any association with publicans and sinners, and who marveled that one who professed to be a divine teacher should sit down and eat with them. To these Scribes and Pharisees our Saviour made known the truth, that the great purpose for which he came was to seek and to save the lost. He showed them that throughout the universe there were no objects of more solicitude than these fallen and guilty ones, and that their repentance and restoration was the cause of great and heavenly joy.

Now I do not understand Christ to say—no one can understand him to say—that God takes more absolute delight in a sinner than in a saint. Nor does Jesus at all encourage the strange conceit that the wandering prodigal is more an object of divine favor than one

who keeps within the bounds of reverent love and service. It seems to me that there is one view which may settle any confusion of thought in this matter, and that is merely the question, whether it is better to sin than not to sin? It is a fact that there is no man without sin; there is no man who stands absolutely in that class of pure and perfect beings upon this earth who might be supposed to be aggrieved by any demonstration of love toward the returning sinner. These Scribes and Pharisees, however, were taken up upon their own assumption; even supposing them to be as righteous as they claimed to be, was the course of the Saviour's argument, still there was this love and care for the repentant sinner. But in reality they were worse sinners than the prodigal. So, practically, there can be no confusion in regard to the matter. And the question really is, whether it is better to sin than not to sin, which hardly needs an answer. And I repeat, therefore, Christ does not encourage the conceit that God loves less those who keep near him in reverent faith and service, because he receives and cares for the wandering or returning prodigal.

But the fact which Jesus teaches here is that gladness and surprise, that joy and gratified affection, with which love welcomes at last its alienated but unsundered objects. In one word, my friends, our Saviour, in the passage before us, shows the identity of the great sentiment of love in heaven and upon earth, in the depths of divine love and in the heart of

man. He appeals to those affections which are most profoundly interwoven in our being. He exhibits the spirit and power of the Gospel as not above or foreign to the elements of our own consciousness, but intimately allied to it. He based this appeal upon that which can be demonstrated from the most familiar and common experience. Take any family circle—and, alas, how many there are!—take any family circle from which one self-deluded member has gone forth, has gone astray, has gone, the rest know not whither; tossed upon some wave of desperate fortune, or fettered in the consequences of his own transgressions; thrown somewhere in this wide world, finding conditions of existence somehow, the Omniscient alone knows how. How many such there are, not in some far-off country, upon some desolate island, or some rugged shore, but right here in the midst of this great city, wrecked among its temptations, drawn down in its whirlpool of sin and shame! yes, how many such are there even in the midst of its luxuries and splendor, groveling in the meanest conditions of sensuality, feeding upon husks, and consorting with swine! How many a stray sheep is there that has wandered far from its fold! how many a lost piece of silver, buried among the rubbish, but belonging still to the great treasury, upon whose dim disk you may yet trace the Maker's image and superscription! How little we know, how little the multitude knows or cares about these lost ones! how little they know or care for themselves, not

having yet come to themselves! Decked it may be in some outward drapery or harlot tinsel, living in abomination, drunk with folly, fascinated with ruin, yet there are those who know and care for them in some far-off home nestling among the hills, around which the new spring is beginning to wreath its beauty, but in which there buds no springing joy, because one is not there, has gone astray, is worse than dead. There is some mother there, watching and praying, hoping against hope, but never losing out of her mind, never casting out of her heart that child's face which once laid upon her bosom, and the life and soul which unfolded under her tender care. There is some father there, whose stern face is only the thin mask of a broken spirit, and whose brief words rise from the depths of an aching solitude. They know and care for this poor outcast, this wretched wandering sheep out in the wilderness, amid the perils of an inhospitable world. Now suppose that on this very day that prodigal should return; suppose that at this hour that lonely, sorrowing mother should be surprised with a glad joy, and that father should see the poor shattered child that has gone out from his love, but has never been beyond its exercise, or beyond his thought—suppose he should see him reeling back to him in his weakness, in his penitence, in his utter abasement, I ask you, could the earth—I might say, could all heaven—restrain the burst of joy that would sweep away all considerations of the

long years of guilt, of the long neglect and shame? Would they not all be swept away before the rising force of that mighty tide of surprise and joy? It is in our nature, it is among its necessities—not merely its possibilities, but its necessities—that all the force of the affection of that father's and that mother's heart should rally in behalf of the alien and outcast. And would there be injustice and unfaithfulness toward those who have remained within the inclosure of obedient love and service? Is love of that nature, that if you give to one you take from another? No, my friends, love is of that nature that it is exhausted not at all, however much it is given to another; but it expands, increases, and unfolds according to the greatness of its nature. There would be no injustice to those who remain, no lack of love, no altering of affection. But only the love that has been secreted through long days and years of sorrow, of loss, of anguish, that love would overflow to welcome back the prodigal.

Now this I take to be the force of our Saviour's declaration in the text, that it is in the nature of love so to cling to its objects, so to care for them, so to claim them, that when they do return it overflows all barriers, it breaks down all other considerations, it shows itself in a more strange and manifest joy than it does for those who are nearer to it, and who remain constantly under the dominion and influence of loyal obedience and affection. Hundreds and thousands there are in this very city who, however far they wander, however deeply

they sink, may still feel, perhaps do feel, that there is a love and care for them upon this earth that can never be changed, that can never be exhausted. But even if there is no such love and care for them upon this earth, they may feel that however forsaken of human regard, there is One who knows and loves them, that they belong to the great family of souls, that they are missed and looked for with a solicitude that fills all heaven. As in the family circle, the return of the wanderer, his penitent and willing return, is received with such a burst of gladness, so the return of these wanderers to truth and holiness and to God, fills all heaven with bliss, and thrills with joy angelic hearts. This is the statement of Jesus Christ in the passage before us. And what I wish you especially to consider, is that this is the very spirit of the whole Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may speculate about difficulties; we may adjust the claims of these and those in what way we choose; I repeat, this is the essence of the Gospel. The essence of the Gospel is not dogma; it is not the sharp statement of any intellectual truth. I do not deny that there are great truths and great doctrines in it. But that is not the point; I say that the essence of the Gospel, its great peculiarity, is not in any statement of God's nature or of man's nature, of the Trinity, of the unity, of human perfectibility, of total depravity. The essence of the Gospel is in its spirit of restoring, of long suffering, of inexhaustible love,

claiming its objects, waiting for them and welcoming them at the last.

But let me say further, under this head, that by the light of this central love and compassion we should interpret the different parts as well as the grand whole of the Gospel. Now you may take texts out of the Bible, and you can prove any doctrine that has ever passed muster under the name of Christianity. By a single text you may prove transubstantiation, you may prove the Trinity, or the unity, or total depravity. Taking simply the textual letter alone, you may prove eternal damnation, or universal salvation; you may prove anything by a single text. But that is not the way to interpret the Gospel or the Bible. Deeper than the interpretations you get out of your dictionaries, Hebrew or Greek, is the spirit with which you are to come to interpret the New Testament, if you would know its radical meaning, its real essence. And yet what are our sects built and founded upon? Upon isolated texts, like forts. They take one text and crowd it through to its extreme meaning, without paying any regard to its ultimate meaning in connection with the body and substance of the Gospel. The Roman Catholic takes the text, "Take, eat, this is my body," and builds up the stupendous dogma of transubstantiation. The Baptist takes a literal meaning of the word "baptize," and builds up his close-hedged communion, denying all Christianity that does not come through that par-

ticular mode of baptism. Another man sees the phrase "everlasting punishment," and without regard to the great fact that the word "eternal" is to be interpreted by the subject with which it is connected—if it is "the eternal hills," they can not be as enduring as "the eternal God;" if it is "the eternal priesthood of Aaron," it can not mean as much as, "the eternal kingdom of Christ"—he takes that text, alone, by itself, and crowds it to its extreme literal meaning, and upon that builds up the dark, crushing, and terrible dogma of eternal damnation. For that stands simply upon the strict interpretation of words; the human heart rejects it, the human reason denies it; but the sharp textualist thrusts forward the phrase "everlasting punishment," and upon that builds up his dogma. The Universalist takes the word "all" and "saved," clinging to them, perhaps, with just as much bigotry as the Presbyterian or the Catholic does to his words, and upon them founds his belief of the ultimate restoration and redemption of the whole human family.

I repeat, this is not the way in which we are to interpret the New Testament. We are to come to the New Testament in its deep essence and purpose. All the sayings of Jesus Christ are to be interpreted in harmony with that spirit; we must take the deep essence and substance of the Gospel. We are to receive what grows out of that—what most accords with its general sentiment. And I say what most accords with the general sentiment of the Gospel, with the deep spirit

and substance of the Gospel, is this simple doctrine, that God cares for the sinner, for the vilest and most abandoned sinner who is upon earth. In a mother's heart there is a love that can not be altered and exhausted, and that will claim that abandoned sinner when he comes back. So in the Infinite bosom, and in the bosoms of all heavenly beings, there exists the same love; the spirit that sent Jesus Christ on earth is that spirit; the purpose of Christ's mission is to declare that spirit. That is the peculiarity of the Gospel over and above everything else. Precisely where man's faith falls and man's hope falters, is it that the Gospel becomes clear and strong. It is not the announcement of the doctrine of evil to the sinner and good to the saint. That doctrine might stand upon any basis, even the basis of worldly morality. But it is the announcement of the doctrine of a good that will forgive the sinner, that will watch upon its objects, wait upon them, and welcome them at last—that is the sublime originality, that is the practical power of the Gospel. And this sympathy is a sympathy that prevails among the purest and best beings of the universe; that is the point. It is not in proportion as a man is a sinner that he sympathizes with the sinner, but in proportion as a being is pure and unsullied is there a sympathy for the sinner which is deep and lasting. Not for the sin; there is the mistake, there is the great distinction. There is no sympathy in God for the sin, but for the sinner. Deeper than that is the doctrine, that in pro-

portion to the grandeur and the largeness of a nature, in that proportion is there this deep and overflowing sympathy.

There is a great meaning in the words of the Apostle Paul, when he speaks of the family on earth and in heaven. Now, my friends, just think what conceptions of heaven have existed, and do still exist. With most persons, heaven is at best merely a material condition—a mere transfer, a mere copy, a mere photograph of this world, touched up in gold, and thrust the other side of the grave. It is simply crystal battlements and golden streets, all the material enjoyments of this world on a higher scale, only more prolonged and lofty in degree; or, if not so, it is merely a negative state. The conception of heaven, in the minds of some, of most persons, is the conception of a condition where no sin can enter, where no uncleanness prevails. When this statement is exhausted, their idea of heaven is exhausted. It seems to be a very monotonous place, hardly so pleasant as the one which was mentioned as the idea of the old lady who thought of heaven as a place where she would always sit in a clean, white apron and sing psalms. With a great many it is merely a place of blank inaction, of stagnation, marked simply by the exclusion of all active effort, of anything like live sympathy. Or if anything else has entered into the thoughts and expectations of men, it is terrible to see what it is. It has been selfishness that has entered the minds of a great

many people, who think of heaven as a place where they can go, and where they will say, "We are saved—glory to God; he has rescued *us* from danger; he has lifted *us* above the roaring waves, he has placed *our* feet upon the rock; *we* are safe." And then there is the elder brother's feeling, who looks out upon the prodigal with disgust and hatred. That is the feeling with which a great many think they are to exist in heaven, looking out with disgust and hatred upon those who are excluded. Nay, more than this; it has been held by the clearest intellect—in some respects, by the sharpest mind that this country has produced—that those in heaven would look down in perfect joy upon the torments of those who are excluded, having their felicity heightened, and the chords of their harps strung to higher music, by considering the pain and woe of those who may be among the lost.

It is not necessary for me to say that that is not the spirit represented by this passage. If Jesus Christ has given us—as I believe he has here—an epitome of the Gospel, there is no such spirit represented in that passage. There is nothing like that running through the deep currents of the New Testament. If anything is made clear, it is that the best affections of this earth are not changed when they are translated to heaven. Yet it has been held that they will be changed, and indeed they must be, if this feeling should enter there, if the time should ever come when the father could look upon the exile and exclu-

sion of his son with joy, or even with apathy ; our affections must be changed, if that can happen. If we have a right to reason upon the subject, if we know anything, if our data are not all baseless, if we are not living in the light of a mere delusion, then our affections must be changed, and for the worse, if ever these best emotions of the human heart, which on this earth must secrete their love for the prodigal, and overflow with love upon his return—if ever these can be so changed that we can regard the condition of him, who is excluded and shut out, with apathy, and even with joy, that is not the doctrine taught in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. You may bring forward all the texts you please—you may harp upon the phraseology that seems to teach the contrary—you may endeavor, by the most subtle reasoning, to show that man's will shall be brought into acquiescence to God's law, and say that man will have such a view of the divine glory in the punishment of sinners, that he will change his ideas—you may arrange all this as you will, I repeat that that doctrine is not the doctrine of the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke. The doctrine there taught is that the best affections of earth are the affections of heaven, only enlarged, only nobler, only broader and deeper in their sympathies ; that is the way to look at and to contemplate heaven. The good man is not changed. He is not called upon to bind up any wounds—to stoop over any fallen and bruised one. Yet the great sentiment

of philanthropy in Howard is expanded out to some nobler object, still going onward. The noble, and the good, and the holy—the lovers of their fellow-man—find higher objects of love and nobler spheres of action. And the affections in the mother's and father's heart work with more diligence—yes, so far as as I can know, so far as you can know—they work for all the objects of those affections, even when they have left this earth—work with a better apparatus of spiritual influence and power, with an affection which is measured by no bounds of time and sense, and with results which, as I look upon them, must, in the end, be sure.

But at the same time while thus we look upon this matter—while we feel that the doctrine of the passage set before us is one of yearning and unending love, even for the guilty—that on earth or in heaven it is the same—that it never changes, but only broadens and deepens—while thus it presents us the fact that there is no barrier on the side of heaven to man's salvation—it still leaves untouched the tremendous responsibility of individual will and action. And though believing as I do, that the upshot and result must be final good for all, I can not hold to that upshot of final good as coming by any desecration of man's personality. If I could believe that, with all these influences brought to bear upon him, man could still hold on to perverse, selfish sin, then I could believe in endless sin. I believe God poised man

upon free action, as he has poised the planets, and that all the good that comes to man must come, not from external pressure, but from his own choice, influenced perhaps by that pressure. Therefore I say that there is no barrier on the side of heaven. Here stands man, untouched in his freedom and personality, moving onward to a wise and holy result, in perfect consistency with that freedom and personality. This, then, I believe to be the spirit of the Gospel, and that whatever stands seemingly opposed to it may be reconciled; and I believe that deeper and deeper runs the spirit of everlasting love. It runs all through the teachings of Jesus.

But these remarks lead me to consider the second point in the text. I said the passage before us exhibits not only the spirit, but the grandeur of Christianity. What its spirit is I have just been endeavoring to show. I say, then, in the first place, consider its grandeur as illustrated in the announcement of Jesus. The declaration in the text reveals two things—the nature of man and his spiritual relations. It exhibits man as a living soul, and as a member of the great family of souls. It strips away all conventionality from him. Christianity is primal democracy, lifted far above anything that either *pro* or *con* bears that name in our day as a party distinction. It is the great doctrine of man higher than his conditions, nobler than any material good.

Why? Because he is a living soul; because within

him there are deathless powers; because he is allied to God by a nature that no other being on this earth bears, and faculties that no other creature on this footstool possesses. That is the great announcement—the key-note of Christianity—the source of its consolation and power.

And this is the source of its great achievement in modern civilization. Subtile theorists ask what Christianity has done for the progress of man. They point to science as working out human progress in its discoveries of truth, its uses of fact, and its adaptation of them to certain purposes of utility. They say man advances just in proportion as he gains knowledge—just according to the sum of human intelligence—and that Christianity, as a moral force, has nothing to do with that advancement. On the contrary, I believe that in this one element alone Christianity has done more for advancement than all that science has discovered and achieved—in the simple statement of the spiritual nature and immortal destiny of every man—in bidding you behold in black and white, rich and poor, high and low, a deathless and priceless soul. Christianity has thus sown the seeds of all progress, laid the foundation of all truth in government, and of all righteousness in society. It has been the master-key to all the grand efforts that man has made to be delivered from bondage, from oppression, from social wrong. It is the soul of liberty; it is the oriflamme that leads the hosts of humanity forward from effort

to effort, to higher and higher social attainments. If you would get at the core of all great efforts; if you would know the trumpet-note in Luther's reformation; if you would feel the power that thunders through the printing-presses; if you would sound the deepest strains of the Puritan's hymn; if you would know what it was that inspired the patriots of the American revolution; what it is that glorifies the Declaration of Independence, that gives it a name to live, disgraced foully as it is in our action; it is simply the doctrine of the worth of every man in the possession of a spiritual and deathless nature. This is what Christianity has contributed to civilization and progress; it is the spring of all the noble efforts of all time.

In the next place, it reveals the relations of man to the whole spiritual universe—his relationship to all spiritual beings. What a grandeur there is in the science of astronomy, that reveals the relations of our world to others—of vast systems to the illimitable scheme of things! What a spectacle is presented when a man first takes up the telescope, and sees amid what myriad of orbs this little dim planet is wheeling! and not only that, but when he recognizes the order that controls all these worlds, and how all things are linked together by one harmonious chain of sympathy, moved in order, obedient to one great law, which is but the express fiat of one intelligent mind! That is a most overwhelming, as it is a most thrilling and glorious view of things. But, after all, it is the material side of things;

and when you take that view alone, it must alarm you, because man shrinks back with awe and with fear when he asks, "What am I in the midst of all this immensity? What am I, considered as a material being, compared with the universe, but a speck of planet-dust that lies on the verge of the firmament? I am nothing. I am here to-day, I am gone to-morrow." The mere revelation of science alone, therefore, I repeat, is enough to crush us. If we take only the material view of things, man is but a little breathing mechanism of to-day, and to-morrow he is swept away like a speck from a revolving wheel.

But what does Christianity do? It does not reverse this exactly, but it moves up to a higher view of things; it turns the spiritual side of facts upon us. In the interpretation of our spiritual nature by Christianity man sees that, little creature as he is in the material sense, viewed as a spirit he is linked to systems and hierarchies of beings, of which these orbs, and planets, and systems are merely vehicles and symbols; that he is connected with all blessed intelligences, with all intellectual and all moral beings throughout the universe. That these outward symbols of things have their significance only in the interpretation of spiritual purposes. They stand merely as vehicles and symbols of spiritual facts. Man, degraded as he may be, and weak as he is, is inalienably linked with spiritual realities.

Thus you see in this fact Christianity is a necessary

complement to science. It is necessary that we should take Christianity to interpret men, and to interpret life. If we take the scientific view alone, without Christianity, it would be appalling. Talk as you please of the glory of science, and the splendor of its revelations, the moment you begin to consult the fact of your own personal destiny, and ask what is your own individual significance in the universe, if you have nothing but the mere revelation of science, it would crush you. Therefore I say that, as a complement to the revelations of science, you need the spiritual revelation of Christianity.

Some people talk of believing only what they can see—what they can handle—what can be made evident to some of their senses. They say, “I will believe in a thing only when I can see it, or when I can touch it.” They are like Thomas, who would not believe in our Saviour’s resurrection until he had thrust his hands into the wounds in his side. Some men who believe in Spiritualism are of this class; they will not believe in it without material and physical demonstration. Spiritual truth can only come to them—so to speak—by a trepanning of the skull—by physical manifestation. Now true spirituality is found in the intuitions of the soul—in the secret whisperings that the martyr hears when he is ready to change earth for heaven—in the chambers of the saint’s mind, when all without is dark. In the intuitive conviction and consciousness is the true basis of all spirit-

uality—not in the material demonstration; and this desire to realize things by the senses is the actual source of all the skepticism that questions the claim of Christianity. Men all admit that Christianity is a glorious system, and that Christ was a blessed teacher. They compliment him and lift him up on the whole a little above Seneca and Plato. They acknowledge the beautiful manifestations of moral excellence in him; they admire the Sermon on the Mount; but they do not know about these spiritual and super-sensual things; they believe only in that which they can see and handle.

What kind of a world is it, if we believe only to that extent? How much can you see and handle, oh, skeptic? What is it you see, oh, sharp philosopher? Do you see matter? Not at all; you only see certain properties and phenomena of matter interpreted to you, not through your senses, but through your consciousness. And even in regard to matter itself, what is it? It is not light, it is not heat, it is not color, it is not extension; these are mere properties. No man ever saw matter. What do you see? Light? No, you do not; you only see certain phenomena of light. The skeptic will believe only in what he can see, and yet believes in matter that he can not see, but which is interpreted only by his spiritual consciousness. Will you believe only that which comes within the limits of your knowledge? How do you know you have the faculties to apprehend all knowledge? Do

we believe the universe has only this phase of truth, which it turns to our faculties? There may be five hundred or five thousand expressions of truth, and we see only five of them. Give to man a sixth sense, and the consequences that accompany it, and he will see more than he did before. Give him a hundred portals of communication, and he will see a hundred things that he does not see now.

Will you limit all truth to what you know? That is the great question that Christianity presses upon us. It bids us look within at our own souls—its wants, needs, demands, and claims—its hunger and thirst for righteousness—its yearning for God. Even in our wildest and strangest wanderings it bids us look within, and it answers and supplies the spiritual demands, just as science answers the sensuous. I am just as sure of spiritual things through the faculties of my soul, as interpreted by Christianity, as ever Newton or Humboldt were sure of material things through the faculties of the brain and senses, interpreted by science. Skepticism stands on no basis at all, only as it stands on that of the senses, and they themselves are verified in their last result by consciousness alone.

Christianity, therefore, I repeat, is the complement of scientific truth in the spiritual facts it reveals to us; and nothing is more grand than man's relation to spiritual beings—than the fact that the universe is filled up with blessed intelligences. I do not need to

see them, or hear them, to be convinced of this fact ; I know by surer sight than the eye, by more certain hearing than the ear, that they exist ; I know it by my vital consciousness of a God and of a heaven. And Christianity interprets that fact. It shows man, poor, wretched, vile as he may be, linked with these innumerable relations.

And what else does it show ? It shows identity of nature in all spiritual things on earth and in heaven. Oh, if you could tear all the Bible in strips, but leave this one saying of Christ, what mighty truth and consolation there would be in it ! “There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” How much that reveals to us—lets in upon us. Joy in heaven ! Then there are beings in heaven capable of joy, just like ourselves—beings in sympathy with us. Joy in heaven ! Oh, forlorn and wayward brother ! you are despised of men, and scorned, and perhaps feel that you ought to be ; you have sinned vilely and grossly ; but do you know what you are ? There might be joy not only in that earthly home that nestles among the hills where your poor mother is praying for you to-day, but also great joy in heaven. What a revelation of an identity of nature—of a celestial sympathy !

Moreover, there is not only sympathy, but there is solicitude there. God is anxious for your return. He will not violate your personality or your freedom. He loves you, based as your welfare is upon your own choice and responsibility, and he pours round you in-

finite means to bring you back to him. It is for you, then, O man—it is for you, it seems, in the last result, to understand and appreciate this spiritual nature of yours. That is the great thing. Men do not know their own souls—they do not know the value of them. They need to be brought to appreciate themselves, as God and all holy beings appreciate them. How much there is to impress you with your soul's importance—to arouse and inspire you to holy life and action! Spiritual solicitude for you! For, as I said before, the larger the nature, the larger the love. Little, mean natures are uncharitable natures. Find a man that is doubtful as to the virtue of his fellow-men, and you may be quite sure that he is a mean man himself. The man that always has a hopeless, sarcastic sneer for his fellow-man, who is in perpetual fear that he will be cheated by them—look out for that man. But the man that hopes or trusts, though none sees the evil more keenly than he; the man who sees something brighter than the sin; who sees the light shining around all, hope around all—that man has a noble nature, a larger and more persistent love. Thank God, there is a divine solicitude for us. God seeks for us as a shepherd seeks for the lost sheep in the wilderness, or as a woman seeks for the lost piece of silver; and with that sympathy are conjoined all that worship around the throne.

Do you want to know where you will find the clearest and most practical expression of that solicitude? It is in the cross of Jesus Christ. That word

is used vaguely. Sometimes people talk about preaching the doctrine of the Cross. Do they know what the real doctrine of the Cross is? It is the expression of this divine solicitude—the very persistence of the divine love in behalf of the sinner. Preach that, believe that, trust in that, listen to the appeal of that, be moved by assurance of that. Be transfigured in your own heart by the same loving and self-sacrificing spirit.

There is a downward joy and an upward joy in the world. The worst trait in wickedness, the worst manifestation of a bad spirit, is joy in the fall of another—joy when sin prevails—joy when a brother trips and stumbles into ruin. Do you remember that terrible but magnificent passage in one of the chapters of Isaiah, where the prophet addresses the king of Babylon, and says: “Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming. It stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?” That is the way bad men feel when a man has lived twenty or thirty years without doing anything wrong, and then falls. “Aha!” they say, “thou hast become like one of us at last.” So the libertine, who has tempted a woman to fall, says to her, “You are debased now.” That is the feeling of men who have gone far in sin, when they put the glass to your lips and succeed in leading you into vice. “It is no use

now ; you are down.” Such a joy as that, my friends, is hellish and abominable ; it is one of the darkest problems in the universe ; it is the grandest embodiment of the devil that I know of. There is only one thing that is almost as bad, and that is the spirit of the eldest son in the parable, who believes he is going to heaven because he has worked for it all his life, and nobody else has any right to go there who has not worked as hard as he has. Or that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who can not bear the idea that God in some way will have mercy upon all—that he would bring all (not *in* their sins, but *out* of them—remember that) into his kingdom at last—that in some way he will break the rocky heart—that he will watch from the eternal heaven, wait and put forth influences until they all come at last into his kingdom. The Scribes and Pharisees can not like that ; they have lived on earth for the purpose of being happy in heaven. Such a spirit is near akin to that which says to the fallen, “You have become like one of us.” That is a downward joy. There is an upward joy that blessed spirits feel when another spirit becomes blessed. It is the joy of redeemed souls when others have become redeemed. It is the joy of those who have fought the good fight and achieved the victory, when others come drenched, as it may be, with the blood of their wounds, but saved and delivered. It is a joy that flows from earth to heaven. As there is light in the morning that goes shimmering up the clear upper sky, so there

is a light that goes shimmering up to the white robes of the blessed, making their crowns brighter, when the faces of the penitent are upturned in prayer. As when the breath of the summer air begins to stir the leaves of the forest, they all shiver and lift themselves with rejoicing, so when the soul of the penitent begins to move, when the guilty heart turns from sin to Christ, there goes forth a breath, an impulse, higher and higher, deeper and deeper, stronger and stronger, until it becomes a sweet hallelujah sweeping all round the courts of heaven. That is the upward joy

Now, oh, man, how do you stand? All heaven sympathizing for you—God solicitous for you, and you holding on to your sin! Are you not ashamed of it? Is it not strange that you will indulge in any sin? For it is not for the outcast merely—the gross prodigal—that he is solicitous, but for all sinners. You have a bosom sin—a bad practice—a vice—or you feel that your heart is full of sin. Are you not ashamed of it? With God Almighty watching for you, with angels solicitous for you when you fall, rejoicing when you rise, can you continue in sin, and turn your face from God! Or will you not be moved, impelled, and inspired by this very sympathy to renounce your sin and rise to newer life? There are great joys in this earth, but the deepest joy is that of turning from the evil to the good, and when that deepest and truest joy springs up in your heart, remember there is joy in heaven.



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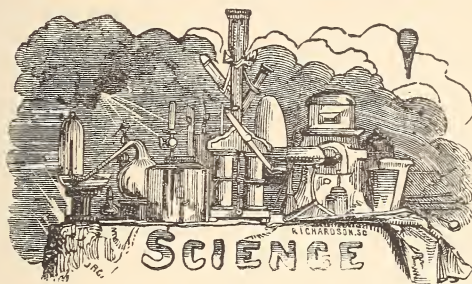
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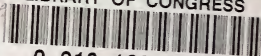
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